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ABSTRACT

This module is the fifth of five integrated professional development modules for adult literacy and basic education (ALBE) personnel. The 12-hour module is designed to build on and develop participants' understandings about language. The stated purposes of this module are as follows: to develop participants' understandings of language as social practice, using particular sites, groups, and disciplines; and to assist participants in their practice as teachers to relate these broader understandings to ALBE teaching and learning situations and design teaching strategies and activities to develop ALBE students' understandings of language as social practice. An overview consists of these components: duration, purpose, relationship to competency standards, prerequisites and/or corequisites, summary of content, delivery, list of learning outcomes, assessment criteria, minimum essential resources, and suggested reading. Program notes provide materials for six sessions. Each session consists of learning outcomes, prereading(s), suggested time, note, and material list. Content is correlated with issues and activities and resources. The resources section contains handouts and overhead transparency masters. The final section contains all readings. (YLB)

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ED 394 009

Inservice Program for Adult Literacy and Basic Education Personnel

Module 5

LANGUAGE

in ALBE Teaching and Learning

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1995

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in the Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney, NSW.

Project Manager: Mike Baynham
Project Writers: Mike Baynham, Betty Johnston, Alison Lee, Michael McDaniel, Hermine Scheeres, Nicky Solomon, Rosie Wickert

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Module 5

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Acknowledgments

National Project Manager: Liz Harris, NSDC

Members of the National Review Panel:

David Riordan	NSW
Gillian Berry	NT
Julie McQueen	VIC
Baljit Bhela	SA
Nan Dingle	QLD
Jim Thompson	WA
Ron Croucher	ACT
Ann Brooks	TAS

Layout and Artwork:

Jan Schuster-Callus and Liza Sunderlin
Centre for Language and Literacy, University of Technology, Sydney

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Heinle and Heinle, Boston, Massachusetts:
Fishman, P. 1983, 'Interaction: The Work Women Do', in *Language, Gender and Society.*, eds B. Thorne, C. Kramerae & N. Henley, Newbury House, Rowley, MA, pp. 98–101.

National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, NSW:
Hammond, J., Burns, A., Joyce, H., Brosnan, D. & Gerot, L. 1992, *English for Social Purposes, Part 1*, NCELTR, Macquarie University, Sydney, pp. 1–8

Northern Territory Department of Education, Darwin:
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Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney for the supply of multiple copies of *Pen '93*, 'Aboriginal English'.

LANGUAGE
in ALBE Teaching and Learning

Overview

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Module Title

Language in ALBE Teaching and Learning

Introductory Note

This module is designed to build on and develop participants' understandings about language. It extends knowledge gained in Modules 1-4 of *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel* and *Adult Literacy Teaching: A Professional Development Course*.

Nominal Duration

12 hours

Module Purpose

To develop participants' understandings of language as social practice, using:

- particular sites, for example: ALBE in the workplace and in mainstream TAFE
- particular groups, for example: Aboriginal students
- particular disciplines, for example literacy and numeracy.

To assist participants in their practice as teachers to:

- relate these broader understandings to ALBE teaching and learning situations
- design teaching strategies and activities to develop ALBE students' understandings of language as social practice.

Relationship to Competency Standards

This program is related to competency statements developed by the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Their research provides the only available framework.

In 1990 the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) set up an International Literacy Year (ILY) project, 'What is a Competent Adult Basic Education Teacher?' which was carried out by the UTS. Their report, *The ABE Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice*, was published in 1993.

A wide cross-section of personnel gave input to the research. They included:

- Steering Committee members from DEET, NSW TAFE, the Australian Council for Adult Literacy, La Trobe University, Sydney Community College, the Australian Teachers Federation and the ILY Implementation Working Group;
- many ALBE practitioners in the field, university staff and students, adult literacy conference delegates, and individuals who responded to requests for feedback.

The results provide a set of competency statements for the profession to use in competency based curriculum development. They describe teachers who have had a few years experience in the field. The resulting profile shows the features of the ALBE professional to which less experienced teachers aspire as they seek competence across a range of skills in a variety of ALBE contexts.

The particular competency statements relevant to this program are found in chapter 4 of *The ABE Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice*, pp. 24, 26 and 30, listed as follows:

4.1 Unit 1: Adult Learning and Teaching Approaches and Practices

Element 1.1 Applies knowledge of theories of language and language learning and teaching to develop adult literacy and numeracy skills.

Element 1.4 Uses a variety of learning and teaching strategies to pursue literacy and numeracy goals for personal, social, educational and vocational purposes.

4.3 Unit 3: Managing Learning Situations

Element 3.1 Uses knowledge of curriculum theories and curriculum documents to develop and implement a program/curriculum compatible with individual, group and program needs.

4.7 Unit 7: Professional Development and Training

Element 7.1 Is informed about current issues, policies and theoretical debates in the field of ABE.

Element 7.2 Is actively involved in continuing professional development in the field of ABE.

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites

- Participants should have completed Module 4: *Linking Theory and Practice.*
- Participants should have completed *Adult Literacy Teaching: A Professional Development Course* (ALT), or equivalent.

Summary of Content

Session 1 Language as Social Practice

Session 2 Language and Gender

Session 3 Language in the Workplace

Session 4 Aboriginal Language Use: the expression of a value system

Session 5 Language and Mathematics

Session 6 Language and Critical Literacy/Numeracy

Delivery

Delivery is by whole group presentation and interactive small group work, as set out in the Program Notes.

As the workshop is designed using a competency based system of training, there is an Assessment Task to be completed within two months of the final session.

The coordinator will be responsible for sending a Statement of Achievement to each participant who completes the Assessment Task to the standard required for this module.

The six sessions may be delivered in a variety of formats, for example:

- singly, or in pairs, over a number of weeks, or
- in two blocks (Sessions 1–3 and 4–6).

Module 5 is not suitable for delivery in one block, due to the complexity of the material presented and the type of assessment task required.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module the participants will be able to:

1 talk and write about language as social practice using the theoretical constructs presented in this program;

2 construct learning activities which promote the understanding of language as social practice in a range of teaching/learning contexts.

Assessment Criteria

Participants will be able to:

1 take an active part in discussion of language as social practice using appropriate concepts and terminology with confidence;

2 analyse language as social practice through examining the way it is used in a range of teaching and learning contexts;

3 prepare teaching/learning materials which are clearly based on the understanding of language as social practice;

4 adopt new teaching strategies which draw on the theory of language as social practice.

Conditions

Participants will be assessed:

- by self-assessment, using the Participant's Profile; and
- by the presenter and/or coordinator who will decide if learning outcomes have been achieved on the basis of
  - participants' involvement in the interactive workshops and
  - their application of theory to practice in a familiar ALBE context, demonstrated through completing one of the two Assessment Tasks listed below.

Assessment Method

Assessment of whether participants have achieved the learning outcomes will be undertaken by the presenter and/or coordinator using evidence from the workshops and from the assessment tasks.

Participants will choose ONE of two assessment tasks. They will be required to complete it within two months and return it to the presenter/coordinator for assessment.

Assessment Task One

- Make an audio-tape recording of a lesson (your own, or a colleague's) and transcribe a unified segment of about 10–20 minutes.
- Provide a description of the context. You may add handouts, examples of student writings and any other relevant materials.
- Analyse the language of the transcript and comment on such aspects as turn-taking, modality and polarity; participants' roles and power relations between participants.

- Comment on implications for improving your practice as an ALBE teacher.

Assessment Task Two

- Develop the outline of a unit of work for teaching/learning in ALBE (3–6 hours).
- Show how it is informed by the understandings of language gained in this program. Include examples of actual learning materials and present the underlying theoretical framework.

Minimum Essential Resources

Requirements for the presenters:

Minimum qualifications for presenters: A post-graduate qualification a with substantial (25%–30%) language component (i.e. TESL or TESOL; Language in Education, Applied Linguistics, Adult Basic Education, or equivalent)

Material requirements for the workshops:

PROGRAM NOTES—commencing on page 11

The Program Notes have some Presenter's Background Notes included at the back of each session. They are essential to adequate preparation for delivering the course.

Some Session Readings are also listed in the Program Notes. They relate directly to the content of the sessions and presenters should present appropriate extracts as suggested.

READINGS—commencing on page 143

All the Pre-Readings are listed and printed in the Readings section. They should be copied and sent to participants in plenty of time for them to be read before the relevant session begins. In particular, if delivery is going to include several sessions on one attendance day then all the Pre-Readings for that day must be provided to each participant well in advance.

Participants should bring Pre-Readings to the relevant sessions.

RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

The Resources section contains master copies for all Handouts and overhead transparencies.

- Handouts should be photocopied and handed out to participants in a folder before Session 1 begins or as appropriate, according to the delivery timetable.
- Overhead transparencies should be made from the pages marked OHT.

- The evaluation form for Session 6 should be photocopied separately so that it can be handed back to the presenter after it has been filled in at the end of Session 6.
- Participant's Profile, column 1, must be filled in at the beginning of the workshop, as Session 1 starts. Participants retain it for future self-assessment: filling in column 2 after Session 6 and column 3, from 3 to 6 months later.
- A whiteboard, an overhead projector, blank transparencies and pens should be available for the presenter during all sessions.
- Presenters need to bring the following materials to each session they are facilitating:
  - the full manual, *Language in ALBE Teaching and Learning*
  - one copy of each of the handouts for their own use
  - a set of the relevant OHTs for that session
  - a copy of each of the items in the bibliography for that session, where possible.

Suggested Reading

The following books and journal articles should be displayed at the workshop. The titles are also printed as the Bibliography for Module 5, Resource 6.4. Suggestions for further reading are provided as participants' handouts to be mentioned at the end of each session.

Session 1 Language as Social Practice

Kress, G. 1988, 'Language as social practice', in *Communication and Culture*, ed. G. Kress, NSW University Press, Sydney.

Luke, A. 1992, When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: rethinking reading in new times, *AJA Nelson Address, Proceedings of the 16th Conference of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy*, NSW Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council.

Scheeres, S., Gonczi, A., Hager, P. & Morley-Warner, T. 1993, *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice*, University of Technology, Sydney.

Wickert, R. & Baynham, M. 1994, ' "Just like farmland and goldmines", Workplace literacies in an era of long-term unemployment', in *Literacies and the Workplace: a Collection of Original Essays*, ed. M. Brown, Deakin University Press, Geelong.

Session 2 Language and Gender

Fishman, P. 1983, 'Interaction: The Work Women Do', in *Language, Gender and Society*, eds B. Thorne, C. Kramerae & N. Henley, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass.

Halliday, M. 1985, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Edward Arnold, London.

Lakoff, R. 1975, *Language and Women's Place*, Harper & Row, New York.

Poynton, C. 1985, *Language and Gender: Making the Difference*, Deakin University Press, Geelong.

Session 3 Language in the Workplace

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. 1993 (draft), *The Language of Productive Enterprise*, NLLIA Centre for Workplace Culture & Communication, UTS, Sydney.

Joyce, H. 1992, *Workplace Texts in the Language Classroom,* AMES, NSW.

Prince, D. 1992, *Literacy in the Workplace: A self-study guide for teachers*, AMES NSW.

Session 4 Aboriginal Language Use: The expression of a value system

Christie, M. J. 1992, *Aboriginal Perspectives on Experience and Learning: the role of language in Aboriginal education*, Deakin University Press, Melbourne.

Eades, D. 1993, 'Aboriginal English', *Pen '93,* Primary English Teaching Association.

Edwards, W. H. 1987, *Traditional Aboriginal Society: a reader*, Macmillan, Melbourne.

Edwards, W. H. 1988, *An Introduction to Aboriginal Societies*, Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, NSW.

Harris, S. 1990, *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and cultural survival,* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Keen, I. (ed.) 1988, *Being Black: Aboriginal cultures in 'settled' Australia,* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

von Sturmer, J. 1981, 'Talking with Aborigines', *Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Newsletter New Series*, No. 15, March.

Walsh, M. & Yallop, C. (eds) 1993, *Language and Culture in Aboriginal Australia,* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Session 5 Language and Mathematics

Boomer, G. 1986, 'From catechism to communication: language, learning and mathematics', *Australian Mathematics Teacher*, 42, pp. 2–7.

Johnston, B. (ed.) 1992, *Reclaiming Mathematics*, DEET, Canberra.

Session 6 Language and Critical Literacy/Numeracy

Fairclough, N. (ed.) 1992, *Critical Language Awareness,* Longman, London.

Luke, A., O'Brien, J. & Comber, B. 1994, 'Making Community Texts Objects of Study', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 17(2).

Poynton, C. 1991, 'Reading the News: representation, agency, control' in *Language in the Social Processes,* ed. F. Christie.

Wallace, C. 1992, 'Critical Literacy awareness in the EFL Classroom' in *Critical Language Awareness.*, ed. N. Fairclough, Longman, London.

LANGUAGE
in ALBE Teaching and Learning

Program Notes

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Presenter's Background Notes are found at the back of each session's Program Notes.

Resources commence on page 67 and contain masters for each handout and for each overhead transparency, arranged in order for Sessions 1 to 6.

Session One

Language as Social Practice

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • describe how language can be understood as social practice • apply this understanding to aspects of ALBE teaching.
Pre-Reading 1	Pre-Reading 1 is to be posted to participants with all the other pre-readings before the start of Session 1. Hammond, J., Burns, A., Joyce, H., Brosnan, D. & Gerot, L. 1992, *English for Social Purposes,* National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney, Part 1, pp. 1–8
Suggested Time	2 hours
Note	Parts of this session will be revision of *Adult Literacy Teaching* Curriculum Area 1 for some participants.
Materials	Name tags and one folder for each participant containing a full set of Handouts for Sessions 1 to 6, or as appropriate (see p. 7, READINGS) Pre-Reading 1 Session 1 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section, pp. 69–88) Presenter's Background Notes 1a and 1b Whiteboard and pens Overhead projector, blank OHTs and pens

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
Introduction		
Who are you?	Ask participants to introduce themselves briefly.	Name tags etc
What do you do?	Introduce yourself in the same way.	
	Ask participants to fill in the first column of the self assessment profile.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.1** Participant's Profile
Module 5 Aims And Learning Outcomes	Present the purpose and learning outcomes of the whole module. Explain how this module builds on: • *Adult Literacy Teaching* Curriculum Areas 1 and 2; and • Module 4 of *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel.*	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.2** Module Purpose and Learning Outcomes
Assessment Tasks	Explain assessment tasks for Module 5. Show Resources 1.3 and 1.4 on OHP.	**OHT** **Resource 1.3** Assessment Task 1 **OHT** **Resource 1.4** Assessment Task 2
	Discuss Resource 1.5.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.5** Assessment Overview for Module 5
Session 1 Learning Outcomes	Show Resource 1.6 and explain learning outcomes for this session.	**OHT** **Resource 1.6** Session 1 Learning Outcomes

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Meaning of the Term 'Language' ***What do you, as practitioners, need to know about language?***	BRAINSTORM NO. 1 Conduct a brainstorm for five minutes at most. • Make a list of all suggestions. • Explain that the group will return to this list at the end of the session.	**OHT Resource 1.7** Record of Brainstorm No. 1: *What do we need to know about language?*
What is 'language'?	BRAINSTORM NO. 2 Lead a second brainstorm with participants. Develop categories from second brainstorm list. Present the key features of language: • distinguish between categories of language – as a medium of expression or reflection and – as a way to construct meaning; • stress that – language is always structured and – the structure is always related to purpose.	**OHT Resource 1.8** Record of Brainstorm No. 2: *Language is...* **Presenter's Background Note 1a**
Language as Social Practice	Link the outcomes of the above activity to the extracts about language on Presenter's Background Note 1a using: • the outcomes of the discussions above and • Resource 1.8 to focus on language as social practice. Refer participants to Resource 1.10 to be read at home.	**HANDOUT Resource 1.9** What is Language? **HANDOUT Resource 1.10** Language as Social Process

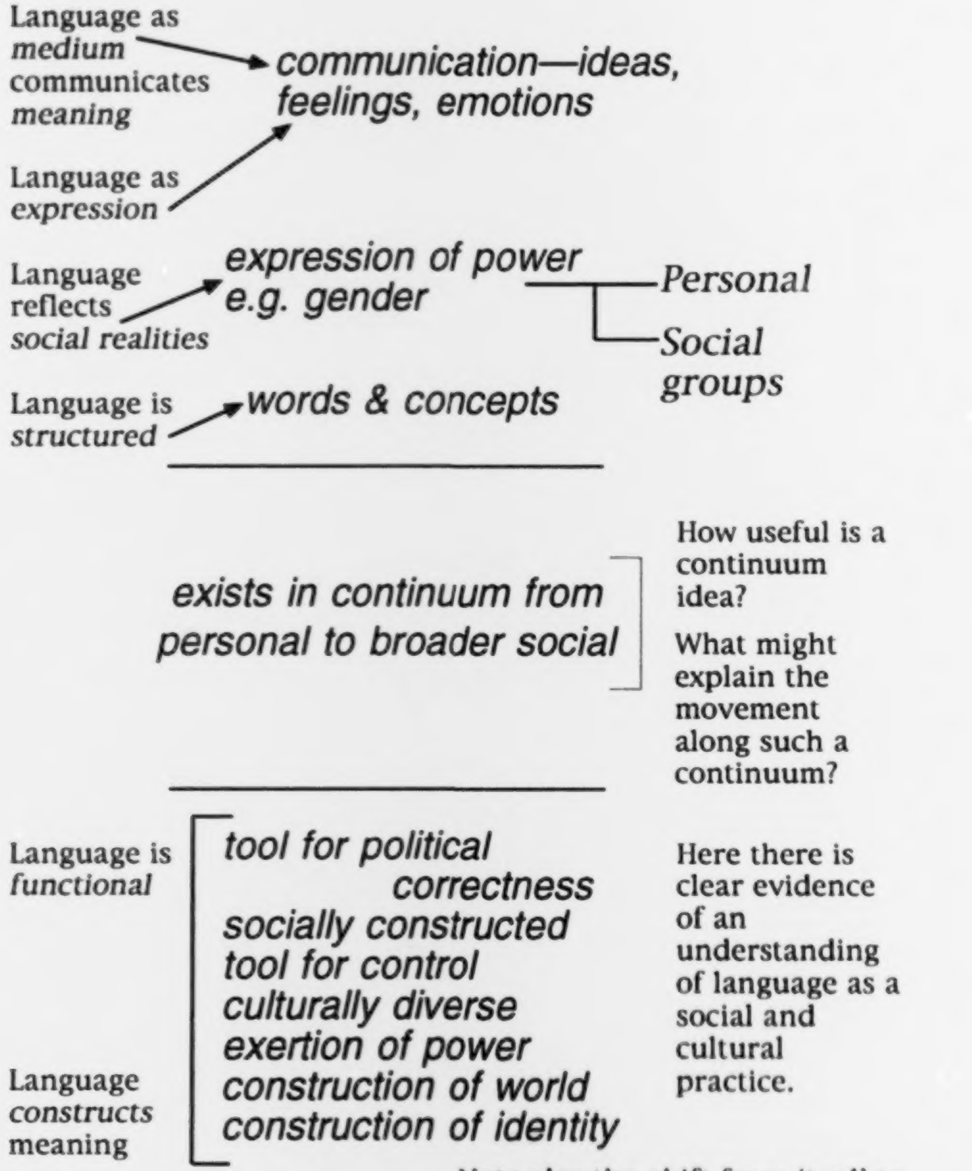
Analysing Language as Social Practice	Extend the analysis of language. Shift the emphasis: • from awareness of language as social practice • to ways of analysing or asking questions about – what language is 'doing' in particular texts – what the texts are 'doing' in particular contexts. Explain that the group is now moving into the part of the session where they will be: – developing skills in using language to talk about language.	
Spoken and Written Language	Present Resource 1.11 and ask participants: • What is the purpose of this text? How do you know this is the purpose? • What is the text about? How do you know? • What is the relationship between the speakers or readers and writers? How do you know? • Is this spoken or written? How do you know?	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.11** Text A: Spoken, An Oral Complaint
	Present Resource 1.12 and ask the same questions again about this text. Ask further questions about both texts: • What are the possible reasons for choosing spoken or written mode here? • What are the effects of the choice?	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.12** Text B: Written, Letter of Complaint
	Using Resource 1.13 on OHP, explain the relationship between – the discussion about Texts A and B and – the genre and register variables of field, tenor and mode. Comment on – how the context enables us to predict the text and language choices that are made and – how the language choices help us to identify the context.	**OHT** **Resource 1.13** Systemic Functional Model of Language
	Point out that the Glossary (Resource 1.19) will be very helpful in clarifying the meanings of specific terms.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.19** Glossary

Spoken and Written Language (continued)	Refer to Resource 1.14. *Use Presenter's Background Note 1b if you need further examples to illustrate the differences between spoken and written language.*	**HANDOUT Resource 1.14** Text C: Spoken Language to Written Language **Presenter's Background Note 1b**
Language in Your Teaching Environment	Introduce the idea that the teaching environment itself can also be understood as a context corresponding to the 'context of culture' layer of Derewianka's diagram (Resource 1.13) with – identifiable texts and – identifiable language choices.	**OHT Resource 1.13** Systemic Functional Model of Language
Role Play Activity	Introduce a role play activity in small groups. *It will encourage participants to think about the kinds of language choices they make in different teaching environments.* Divide participants into 3 groups, each with a spokesperson. Give one scenario from Resource 1.15 to each group and ask them to start to write a role play. Allow them 5 minutes only to compose the first 2 sentences and write them on blank OHTs. When ready, the whole group listens as each spokesperson presents the group's introductory sentences. Lead a discussion on the differences in language choices in the role plays, i.e. how field, tenor and mode variables are realised in different ways according to the context of situation and culture. Keep the findings of the discussion on Resource 1.16 for use in the next session, Session 2. Note: *The participants will begin to:* • *'read' their teaching/learning environments as instances of language-in-use, and* • *'read' classroom interaction as 'text' which can be analysed with the same methods used with Resources 1.11 and 1.12—Spoken and Written Language.*	**HANDOUT Resource 1.15** Role Play Scenarios **blank OHTs, one per group** **OHT Resource 1.16** Record of Role Play Discussion

Conclusion to Session 1	Conclude this session by highlighting: • the importance of understanding the way language functions as social practice and • the importance of developing a language for talking about language, i.e. a meta-language. Ask participants to consider the following questions: • How would I apply this knowledge to my teaching? • How would I change the way I teach students about language?	
	Compare the answers to these 2 questions to the responses gained from Brainstorm No. 1 in answer to the question: 'What do you, as practitioners, need to know about language?'	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.7** Record of Brainstorm No. 1
	Summarise this session, referring participants to Resource 1.17.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.17** Summary of Session 1: Language as Social Practice
	Refer participants to the bibliography for this session.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.18** Bibliography for Session 1
	Refer them also to the Glossary.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.19** Glossary
Introduction to Other Sessions	Remind participants to bring Pre-Reading 2 to the next session as it will be needed for an activity. Explain the structure of the rest of the module. Mention the themes of: – language and power – language and culture – language awareness and critical literacy and numeracy.	

Presenter's Background Note 1a to accompany Resource 1.7

Language is ...



Language as medium communicates meaning → *communication—ideas, feelings, emotions*

Language as expression → *communication—ideas, feelings, emotions*

Language reflects social realities → *expression of power e.g. gender* — Personal — Social groups

Language is structured → *words & concepts*

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exists in continuum from personal to broader social

How useful is a continuum idea?

What might explain the movement along such a continuum?

Language is functional

Language constructs meaning

tool for political correctness
socially constructed
tool for control
culturally diverse
exertion of power
construction of world
construction of identity

Here there is clear evidence of an understanding of language as a social and cultural practice.

Note also the shift from 'tool' to 'construction'— from something that one might use to something which inevitably constructs meaning.

Note: This is an example of an overhead developed during a trial of Session 1. It is included because it provides some useful material for stimulation.

Presenter's Background Note 1b to accompany Resources 1.11, 1.12 & 1.14 (page 1)

CONTEXT and TEXT

TEXT 1

1. Context of culture	
What is the purpose of text A?	To complain
What is the genre?	Argument (hortatory) —persuading someone to **do** something
How do you know?	The text introduces an argument and presents a point of view (L 1–11). The next section backs up or elaborates on the position (L 11–16). Then there is a resolution (L 17–22).
2. Context of situation	
FIELD	
What is the text about?	The Council's recycling service.
How do you know?	By looking at the main lexical strings, i.e. the words that tell you about: a. the service b. the street and/or the residents c. the Council and/or the contractors. Note: The service string could be seen as a part of the Council/contractor's string.
TENOR	
Who is involved?	Council workers and resident
What is their relationship?	Quite informal but a bit distant—the speakers don't know each other. The caller has some power, the power or right to complain, but the Council worker has overall power in this text, i.e. the decision to take action or not.

Presenter's Background Note 1b
(page 2)

TEXT 1 continued

TENOR continued	
How do you know?	The council worker, through interrogatives (in L 1–14), assumes the position of 'helper' and uses the modal 'can'. The caller is 'allowed' to present the complaint, but the Council worker moves decisively to a new stage (in L 17), signalled by 'All right'. The Council worker's language moves from the questions in the opening stage to declaratives with a different modal 'will', instead of 'can'. The Council worker presents the resolution without room for further comment or argument. Note the use of relational processes 'have/is'. They present the situation as it is!
MODE	
Is the text spoken or written?	Spoken
How do you know?	It is a dialogue. Sentences are often made up of several clauses joined by 'because', 'but' and 'so'. (It is also common to use 'and' in spoken language.) Some sentences begin with 'Well', 'All right' and 'Now'. There is no nominalisation. The action remains active except for L 20–21 when the Council worker uses 'paper and glass collection'. The lexis is not dense, i.e. there are no complex nominal groups.

Presenter's Background Note 1b (page 3)

TEXT 2

1. Context of Culture	
What is the purpose of text B?	To complain
What is the genre?	Argument (hortatory); persuading someone to do something
How do you know?	The text introduces the argument, i.e. presents a point of view (L 6–7), then supports the argument (in L 8–14) and further elaborates it (in L 14–16). A suggested resolution occurs in L 17-18.
2. Context of Situation	
FIELD	
What is the text about?	The Council's recycling service
How do you know?	By looking at the main lexical strings, i.e. the words that tell you about: a. the service b. the speaker c. the Council. Note: The service string could be seen as a part of the Council string.
TENOR	
Who is involved?	Council worker and resident
What is their relationship?	Quite formal and distant—the workers and residents don't know each other (see L 5 and L 17–18). The writer has some power or right to complain, but the Council worker has overall power in this text: to take action or not.

Presenter's Background Note 1b
(page 4)

TEXT 2 continued

TENOR continued	
How do you know?	The writer acknowledges the power of the reader by the modal 'could' and the choice of 'please' which opens the interrogative (L 17). The important thing to notice is that these changes in language appear in the concluding stage: the *suggested* resolution. (It is a modalised interrogative which desperately wants to be an imperative.)
MODE	
Is the text spoken or written?	Written
How do you know?	Letter format. Linking words are rare. However, there are embedded clauses and nominalisations, e.g. 'recycling service', 'garbage collection', 'paper and bottle collection' and 'collection dates'. The lexis is much denser and there are more complex nominal groups (noun strings) than in Text 1, e.g. 'recycling service timetable'.
What are the possible reasons for choosing spoken or written language in this case?	a. Spoken language may have been chosen because the speaker – wanted immediate contact, or – doesn't like formality. b. Written language may have been chosen because – it provided a record of the complaint, or – the writer felt it was more powerful, or – the writer felt it was necessary in order to get something done.

Session Two

Language and Gender

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • demonstrate the gendered nature of language practices; • apply this understanding to ALBE teaching; and • critically examine their own and their students' speech practices in terms of gender power relations.
Pre-Reading 2	Pre-Reading 2 will have been posted to participants so that they can read it before the start of Session 2. Fishman, P. 1983, 'Interaction: The Work Women Do', in *Language, Gender and Society*, eds B. Thorne, C. Kramerae & N. Henley, Newbury House, Rowley, MA, pp. 98–101.
Suggested Time	2 hours
Materials	Pre-Reading 2 Session 2 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section, p. 89–101) Presenter's Background Notes 2a, 2b and 2c Whiteboard and pens Overhead projector, blank OHTs and pens
Presenter's Preparation	Read pages 121 to 144 of *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, 5th edn., 1994, AGPS.

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
Introduction to Session 2	Introduce Learning Outcomes for this session.	**OHT Resource 2.1** Session 2 Learning Outcomes
Discussion: Experiences and Issues in Gender Relations	Participants briefly share experience of the ways that gender has mattered in their teaching.	
	Relate the general points in Resource 2.2 to the experiences of participants, both in and out of their work environment. *This excerpt comes from an article by O'Barr and Atkins (1980) 'Women's Language or Powerless Language?'. (See Bibliography for full reference.) In it they discuss the implication for lawyers of the way female witnesses use less authoritative language when testifying. They note that in America, trial practice manuals usually contain instructions for lawyers to treat women witnesses differently from men.*	**OHT Resource 2.2** Gender Issues in Spoken Language **Presenter's Background Note 2a**
	Discuss whether any of these issues have been significant for participants in their teaching. Record the discussion main points on OHT.	**OHT Resource 2.3** Record of Discussion: *How has gender mattered in your teaching?*
	Notes: *The points made in Resources 2.1 and 2.2 refer to widely held beliefs and claims, in the absence of systematic research.* *This activity and the next one focus on the interpersonal functions of language.* *Gender differences in speech are often achieved through the following:* *modality, polarity, turn-taking and topic choice.* *(Turn-taking and topic choice are addressed in the activity which follows modality and polarity.)*	

How Language Constructs and Maintains Unequal Gender Relations ***What are modality and polarity?***	Read out the examples of modality and polarity from Resources 2.4 and 2.5. *The examples show:* • *a modalised utterance* • *the same utterance re-written with modality removed, i.e. so it is now a polarised utterance.*	**OHTs Resources 2.4 and 2.5** Modality and Polarity in Spoken Language
	Ask participants to compare the two utterances and to analyse the significance of the differences between them, using Resource 2.6.	**HANDOUT Resource 2.6** Modality and Polarity in Spoken Language
	As a whole group, discuss the differences and work together to produce a first definition of modality and polarity. Keep a record of the definition on an OHT.	**blank OHT**
	Read out Resource 2.7 and discuss these 'official' definitions, comparing them with the ones derived by participants.	**HANDOUT Resource 2.7** Definitions and Discussion of Modality and Polarity
How are modality and polarity significant for gender relations?	Form participants into small groups or pairs to discuss Lakoff's list and discuss its relevance to their experience and beliefs about modalised language, especially in ALBE teaching and learning.	**HANDOUT Resource 2.8** Lakoff's Categories of Women's Language **Presenter's Background Note 2b**
	Lead a plenary discussion with examples, using the responses recorded in Session 1 on Resource 1.16 (OHT from Session 1). Focus the discussion around the following questions: • *Are there problems and limitations in Lakoff's viewpoint?* • *What might be a better explanation of the presence of modalised features in language used by an ALBE teacher or by a learner?* • *How could participants use knowledge about modality to analyse their teaching practice?*	**OHT Resource 1.16** Record of Role Play Discussion (from Session 1)

Turn-Taking and Topic Choice ***How are they significant for gender relations?*** ***How does this knowledge affect you as a teacher?***	Allow time for participants to read again pages 98–100 of Pre-Reading 2. In small groups using Resource 2.9, discuss the Questions 1 and 2 which arise from Fishman's findings. 1 'How do the findings…relate to your perception of…?' 2 'How would you account for any differences between your experiences and…?' Note: *Presenter's Background Note 2c offers suggestions for assisting the small groups in these discussions.*	**Pre-Reading 2** **HANDOUT Resource 2.9** Turn-Taking and Topic Choice **Presenter's Background Note 2c**
Gender Dynamics in ALBE Contexts	Arrange small discussion groups, each with a spokesperson, to consider this question: • *How might you, as a teacher, gain* – *a clearer understanding and* – *a more systematic knowledge* *of the gender dynamics of verbal interaction in your ALBE situation, particularly with respect to turn-taking and topic choice?* Ask participants to record individually the outcomes of this discussion as they could be useful for Assessment Task One. Ask spokespersons to report their small group's discussion highlights to the whole group on: • ways of gaining a clearer and more systematic notion of gender and language, particularly with respect to turn-taking and topic choice • strategies for addressing gender imbalances in turn-taking and topic choice in various ALBE contexts. Record the main points on butcher's paper or OHT.	**blank OHT**
Non-Discriminatory Language and Inclusiveness	Lead a brainstorm with the whole group and record the outcomes on OHT or whiteboard. Discuss how this session's findings can be applied widely to using non-discriminatory language in many other areas, e.g: racism, way of life, culture, religion, age, disability, socio-economic level.	**blank OHT** *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, 5th edn., 1994, AGPS, pp. 121–144

	Note: The *next activity is an Extension Activity and is optional, depending on remaining time available.*	
Primary and Secondary Knowers	Explain that • the term 'primary knower' can be defined as: 'one who authoritatively controls the knowledge in an interaction'; and • this role is characteristically distributed unevenly across genders.	
	In small groups, study the short transcripts of classroom verbal interactions (Resource 2.10).	**HANDOUT** **Resource 2.10** Verbal Interactions
	Note: *Presenter's Background Note 2d offers prompts for 'listening in' to the groups and assisting them to analyse the interactions.*	**Presenter's Background Note 2d**
	Display Resource 2.11 Arrange for discussion in small groups of the questions on Resource 2.11 with a scribe recording the main points. Plenary group reports of discussions held in small groups. Discuss strategies for using analysis (such as the above) for improving verbal interaction in all ALBE teaching and learning practices.	**OHT** **Resource 2.11** Primary and Secondary Knowers
Conclusion	Refer Participants to this session's bibliography.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 2.12** Bibliography for Session 2

Presenter's Background Note 2a to accompany Resource 2.2

1. What are some important gender issues in ALBE practice?

Some key points to cover:

- Historically, women have constituted the majority of both teachers and learners in adult basic education on a national basis. This has made it a substantially feminised practice.
- The linking of unemployment benefits to pre-vocational and labour market programs is causing a shift in the gender balance of students enrolling in ALBE classes with the largest new category being young men. This is causing a different social and pedagogical climate with effects on both providers and participants.
- The growth in adult literacy provision and the provision of substantial federal government funding into research and development, together with the large-scale restructuring of TAFE, have led to an increase in the number of men in senior and influential positions within ALBE. This is particularly the case with the shift in adult literacy provision towards vocational education and training.

2. What is the role of language in the construction and maintenance of gender relations?

Issues that might arise:

- sexist language, in teaching/learning or among colleagues (mostly referring to word choices)
- dominance of official and technical languages
- women feeling powerless to speak in public forums
- some men dominating public occasions by taking up a great deal of 'air space'
- men's physically deeper voices tending to give their words more apparent authority.

Note:

There has been little or no research on gender and language in ALBE, so the materials and readings provided here report on research carried out in non-ALBE contexts such as schools, law courts and informal settings.

The important task for ALBE personnel is to relate this material to the context of their own teaching practice and their institution.

Presenter's Background Note 2b to accompany Resource 2.8

Research has indicated that women are more likely to use modalised utterances than men.

In some influential early writing, Robin Lakoff (1975) has used the term 'women's language' to refer to modalised features in the language used by women.

Modalised language is often also identified as a marker of 'powerless' speech more generally, as, for example, in the O'Barr and Atkins research, where witnesses in court cases are in a relatively less powerful position than the cross-examining barristers.

Most discussion devalues this speech feature. Terms such as these are common:
'hedge' (Lakoff)
'stereotype of tentativeness' (Poynton, 1985)
'subordinate tenor' (Threadgold, 1988)
'excessive politeness' (Poynton, 1990).

However, there are important limitations and problems with this early work.

> For example, in the language of Resource 1.15 there are varying degrees of modality. This shows that modality may be used to negotiate power in situations where it may not be appropriate to use the most powerful or authoritative language.

Presenter's Background Note 2c to accompany the discussion of Resource 2.9

Common Beliefs vs Research Findings

What to look out for....

- Because language is often almost automatic, we tend not to notice many of its characteristic patterns unless they are systematically researched.
- Dale Spender, in *Invisible Women: the Schooling Scandal* (1982) tells us that even when women school teachers in her study believed they had been devoting more than half of their attention to girls, the tape-recorded evidence indicated that it was less than one third.

Focus discussion on how best to understand this discrepancy.

Presenter's Background Note 2.d

Notes on Analysis of Transcripts

Belmont SkillShare

Dave takes up and keeps 'primary knower' status throughout this excerpt. He is telling Jo what he knows. This is indicated most strongly when he begins one turn with 'See'.

Jo takes up the secondary position in the interaction, providing support for Dave's 'k1' (shorthand for primary knower) role. She does the interactive *work* in the conversation. She does this by the use of 'Yeah', indicating support for Dave's position and implicit agreement that he continue in the k1 role. When she says 'lunchtime' she attempts to participate in the interaction more actively as a primary knower, similarly with 'Yeah, same as jogging'.

Dave does minimal interactive work. When Jo tries 'lunchtime' Dave acknowledges that she has spoken by beginning his next turn with 'Well'. This is not a supportive move, however, and he immediately continues by adjusting back to his original direction. When Jo tries to enter the conversation again with 'Yeah same as jogging', Dave again acknowledges this by replying 'Yeah'. However, again, he uses this strategy to deflect her attempt at k1 and return to his original direction.

Year 11 Geography

This excerpt was recorded from 10 minutes after the start of a group discussion on climate controls.

The group is attempting to work together to develop a procedure for tackling the task. For example, Michael says 'Let's work that out first'. They are also negotiating to establish primary knower (k1) status. Mandy has been silent so far. Michael begins this segment of the discussion by attempting to establish the k1 role for himself. He does this by stopping the proceedings so far with, 'Hey. Wait. Wait!' Gerard takes the position of Michael's seconder, with 'yeah'. Mandy, speaking for the first time, attempts to gain k1 with her challenge, 'How can you do that if you don't even know what the effects are?' She is in k1 role when she gives the information, 'There's the effects.' And she is attempting to direct the attention of the others by repeating 'there' and underlining her point with 'That little bit'.

Michael explicitly rejects this attempt by saying, 'You think you got'. He does not establish that she is wrong by argumentation but by indicating the inappropriateness of her attempt. Perhaps this can be interpreted as, 'You think you have the knowledge, but you don't'. He follows this with an explicit attempt to control her speech. 'I'd just be quiet if I was you' may also contain a threat. Andrew's indistinct interjection from the other group functions to weld the boys together in a group, indicating perhaps both solidarity within the boys' grouping and a challenge to Michael as an individual.

In the second excerpt, Mandy tries to establish control as k1 again. This time Gerard rejects her attempt. Again, like Michael, he does not do this by rational argument but by an attempt to control her behaviour. He positions Mandy's k1 attempt as inappropriately bossy. He does this by positioning Michael as a 'kid'. This may then affect Gerard's ability to establish k1 for himself.

Session Three

Language in the Workplace

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • explain the implications for language teaching of changing social processes in the workplace; • construct teaching activities which promote the understanding and use of language appropriate to the workplace.
Pre-Reading 3	Pre-Reading 3 will have been posted to participants before the start of Session 3. Prince, D. 1992, *Literacy in the Workplace: A Self-study Guide for Teachers*, AMES, NSW, pp. 83–6.
Suggested Time	2 hours
Materials	Pre-Reading 3 Session 3 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section pp. 102–108) Presenter's Background Notes 3a and 3b Whiteboard and pens Overhead projector, blank OHTs and pens

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
Introduction	Introduce Learning Outcomes for this session.	**OHT** **Resource 3.1** Session 3 Learning Outcomes
Changing Contexts: New Ways of Working	Ask participants to read the description of a workplace in Resource 3.2.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 3.2** Case Study 1: Description of a Workplace
	Add extra information as further background to workplace restructuring, as needed.	
	In the whole group discuss:	
	• the range of contexts in which the operators work in this workplace	
	• differences between the role of an operator in this workplace and the role of an operator in the same company before restructuring.	
	Note the main points on board or OHT.	**blank OHT**
	Take into account the information in Presenter's Background Note 3a.	**Presenter's Background Note 3a**
Implications for ALBE	Lead a discussion on the implications of these new ways of working for: – teachers and – ALBE students.	
	Also discuss the fact that not all workplaces are undergoing reforms at the same pace as the one in the case study.	
	Draw participants' attention to Pre-Reading 3 which helps to build up a bigger picture of workplaces.	**Pre-Reading 3**
	Discuss the questions on the OHT, Resource 3.3, concerning the Case Study 2, i.e. Prince's article.	**OHT** **Resource 3.3** Case Study 2: Literacy in the Workplace

Spoken and Written Language in Work Contexts	Ask participants to read Resource 3.4. When they have finished explain some or all of the features of the oral exchange and the written Application for Leave form, as appropriate to the group:	**HANDOUT** **Resource 3.4** Case Study 3: A Workplace Text
	Refer to Resource 3.5 which shows an actual workplace leave form.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 3.5** Sample Text: Application for Leave
	Use the annotations on Presenter's Background Note 3b which highlight language features of the Leave Form.	**Presenter's Background Note 3b**
	Using these two resources (3.4 and 3.5) discuss – similar – different and – overlapping roles of spoken and written language in various work contexts. Draw attention to examples such as: • an overall increase in the amount of spoken and written communication in the workplace; • constant shifting backwards and forwards from spoken to written texts, e.g. – in meetings, where spoken interactions often refer to written documents, such as agendas, minutes, or weekly production plans; • the role of written language in these contexts to – record information – be accountable – standardise procedures – provide a point of reference – pass on information etc. Emphasise that • the role of spoken language in these contexts is to pass on information, BUT importantly, it is to do with establishing and maintaining relationships in the workplace, and • such relationships are critical to team work.	

Interpersonal Language Features	Ask participants – to form small groups – to read the handout (Resource 3.6) and – discuss the language features. Insist that they must include linguistic evidence in their discussion of these questions: • In what context of work does this exchange take place? • What is the purpose of the exchange? • How well do the interactants know each other? • Do the workers have equal status?	**HANDOUT** **Resource 3.6** Oral Exchange in the Workplace **Presenter's Background Note 3c**
Interpersonal Meanings • **in spoken language**	Lead a discussion of the different ways in which interpersonal meanings are realised in language. Examples: • 'interpersonal' texts, e.g. gossip, chat and jokes during coffee breaks, and at the beginning and end of the day; • embedded in other texts/situations, e.g. in gossip, chatting and jokes during meetings and while working on the production line; • in the lexico-grammar, e.g. – use of plural pronouns: 'we', 'our' – use of modality that leaves the statement open to discussion: 'maybe', 'probably' – use of mental processes: 'I was thinking' – use of colloquial expressions: 'chuck out' etc. Summarise, and point out, that: different lexico-grammatical choices reflect the different role-relations of the participants.	**Presenter's Background Note 3d**

• **in written language**	Discuss the way interpersonal meanings are not confined to spoken interactions, referring to Resource 3.7. Example: While Plain English is in part about simplifying language so that meaning is accessible, it is also about setting up a dialogue between the reader and the writer. Note: *Plain English guidelines recommend the use of questions, names (vocatives), and spoken language features in written documents.*	**HANDOUT Resource 3.7** Beyond Plain English
Conclusion	Refer participants to the bibliography for this session.	**HANDOUT Resource 3.8** Bibliography for Session 3
	Close the session indicating that participants should be prepared to apply what has been covered here when they reach Session 6: Language and Critical Literacy and Numeracy.	
	Hand out Pre-Reading for Sessions 4 and 5 to anyone who has not yet received them.	**Pre-Readings 4 and 5, if needed**

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Presenter's Background Note 3a to accompany Resource 3.2

Workplace features that have not changed:

- Communication in meetings, e.g. daily information meetings, production line meetings, occupational health and safety meetings, whole company meetings re enterprise agreements
- Training on-the-job and off-the-job
- Communication on the production line including interactions with co-workers and technical support workers such as dispensary workers, fitters and turners, quality control personnel
- Informal exchanges during coffee breaks, lunch and smokos.

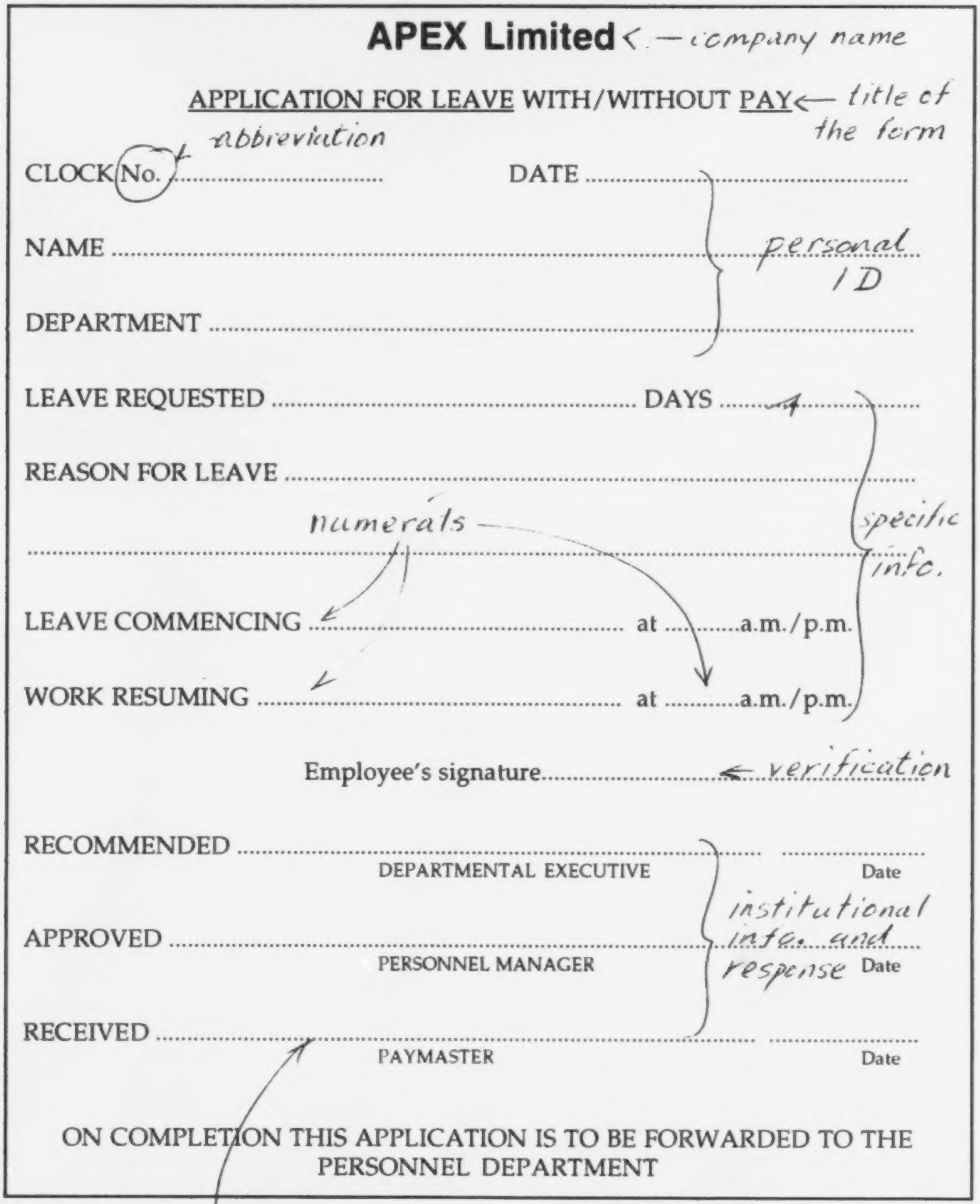
Workplace features which have changed:

- Increase in number of contexts for language use:
    - formal and informal communication of information about change
    - participating in formal teams, e.g. quality work teams
    - learning new skills and technologies, involving an increased number of written documents and spoken language interactions.
- Increase in each employees roles and responsibilities, both of which rely on knowledge of the company and work practices beyond the employee's own work role.
- Increase in concerns about job security.

Presenter's Background Note 3b to accompany Resource 3.5

Filling in forms is often accompanied by oral language skills.

This sample illustrates how intertwined oral and written language are—E (in Resource 3.4) is asking for assistance and clarification regarding an 'Application for Leave' form.



APEX Limited < — company name

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE WITH/WITHOUT PAY ← title of the form

abbreviation

CLOCK No. .... DATE ....

NAME .... personal ID

DEPARTMENT ....

LEAVE REQUESTED .... DAYS ....4....

REASON FOR LEAVE ....

numerals

.... specific info.

LEAVE COMMENCING .... at .... a.m./p.m.

WORK RESUMING .... at .... a.m./p.m.

Employee's signature .... ← verification

RECOMMENDED ....
DEPARTMENTAL EXECUTIVE Date

APPROVED ....
PERSONNEL MANAGER Date

institutional info. and response

RECEIVED ....
PAYMASTER Date

ON COMPLETION THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE FORWARDED TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

dotted lines indicate space to write

Presenter's Background Note 3c

Implications of the Importance of Interpersonal Meaning for your Learners

Link this Background Note to aspects of Learning Outcome 1: 'talk and write about language as a social practice', as it relates to the important place of interpersonal meaning both in the ALBE classroom and in the workplace.

Participation between workers involves shared understandings of:

- the 'culture' of the workplace
- the role of the contexts within this culture
- the role of the individuals within the context
- the role of spoken and written texts
- the role of 'interpersonal chunks' in texts and
- lexical and grammatical realisations of interpersonal meanings.

Such shared understandings cannot be taken for granted given the different cultural backgrounds of learners/workers together with different gender experiences within these diverse cultures.

Many learners will have different cultural expectations of work practices. They may be unfamiliar with the wide range of contexts and work roles and the expectation of joint decision making and the language resources needed to participate in the range of work roles.

Examples

- Classroom activities need to promote
  - an understanding of the 'culture' of the classroom and the workplace and
  - how this is reflected in the types of activities and language used.

- Use the classroom as a model.
  Consider the social processes in the classroom
  - the role of interpersonal texts and
  - interpersonal 'chunks' in texts and language.

  Practise such language and consider its place in work activities.

- Classroom activities need to reflect social activities in the workplace, e.g.
  - group work
  - joint problem solving
  - giving instructions
  - chat.

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Presenter's Background Note 3d to accompany Resource 3.6

Oral Exchange in the Workplace

Feedback from the group may include the context:

- a weekly planning meeting in a large food manufacturing enterprise
- the discussion on the possibility of changing the shift start time from 6:30 am to 6:00 am
- the fact that the employees work within the same department in different sections at slightly different levels, yet in these weekly planning meetings they interact 'as equals'.

You should emphasise the following language features:

- use of first names
- use of plural pronouns, e.g. *we*, indicating solidarity
- challenging opinion, e.g. *that's a tall one fellas*, indicating similar status and frequent contact
- no modality or low modality indicating similar status and frequent contact, e.g. *I'm not changing; I don't want to change.*
- offering opinion with modality indicating that it is open for negotiation, e.g. *I think it is worth mentioning that from the packing point of view it would be better…*
- asking questions in order to open up exchanging, e.g. *Why do you not agree with it John? Any particular reason?*

Session Four

Aboriginal Language Use: the expression of a value system

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • appreciate Aboriginal language use as an expression of a particular value system • appreciate the difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal use of English • broadly identify appropriate teaching strategies which take Aboriginal values and communication styles into account.
Preparation	**Presenter's recommended readings:** Harris, S. 1977, chapter 2 Edwards, W. H. 1988, chapter 9 Christie, M. J. 1992, chapters 2 and 3 See Bibliography for this session for full details (Resource 4.8).
Pre-Readings	There are two Pre-Readings for Session 4. • Eades, D. 1993, 'Aboriginal English', *Pen '93* (pamphlet), Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney. (Supplied inside the front cover of this folder. Copy it and post to participants before Session 4.) • Harris, S. 1977, 'Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication', *Developing Education*, vol. 4, no. 5, pp. 23–29, Northern Territory Department of Education.
Suggested Time	2 hours
Materials	Pre-Readings for Session 4 Session 4 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section, pp. 111–122) Presenter's Background Note 4a Whiteboard and pens Overhead projector, blank OHTs and pens

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
Preparation	Read Presenter's Background Note 4a and the four presenter's recommended pre-readings.	**Presenter's Background Note 4a**
What are value systems?	Show Resource 4.1 on OHP; then 4.2. Lead a group discussion on 'What are value systems?' (Participants refer to their copies of Resource 4.3). Extend the discussion to a particular example: a. Discuss how one value common to industrialised nations serves to support a capitalist (i.e. profit producing) industrial economy. The value—competition b. Consider the possibility of maintaining such a society if competition were discouraged.	OHT **Resource 4.1** What are Value Systems? OHT **Resource 4.2** What are Value Systems? **HANDOUT** **Resource 4.3** What are Value Systems?
What are the characteristics of the Aboriginal value system?	Display Resource 4.4 on OHP and allow time for participants to read it. Arrange whole group consideration of this OHT and lead discussion on: • the Aboriginal value system. Using Resource 4.5 lead discussion on Aboriginal concepts and values.	OHT **Resource 4.4** A Note on the Aboriginal Value System **HANDOUT** **Resource 4.5** Some Key Aboriginal Concepts and Values

What are the characteristics of the Aboriginal value system? (continued)	Discuss how these values would have served a society with the following characteristics: • based on a hunting and gathering economy • possessing an abundance of natural resources • small in scale (approximately 15–35 people per clan, depending on environmental circumstances) • extremely public • economically highly interdependent Consider the mutually supportive relationship between these values.	**Presenter's Pre-Readings** Christie, 1990 Edwards, 1987 Harris, 1992
Language Use as an Expression of Different Value Systems	Group discussion of Pre-Reading 4, Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication. DISCUSSION PROCEDURE: a. Presenter reads certain ones (or all) of the scenario questions contained Pre-Reading 4. The questions should be proposed and considered one at a time. b. Participants consider and discuss the answers, i.e. consider their personal response to such a situation. c. Presenter reads Harris' explanation, adding further clarification, as needed. d. Presenter moves on to the next scenario question and repeats the activity. 3. Briefly discuss Resource 4.6 on Cross-Cultural Communication and link it with the Pre-reading and the points made in the discussion above.	**Pre-Reading 4** Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication **Presenter's Background Note 4b** **HANDOUT Resource 4.6** Cross-Cultural Communication – A Case Study

	FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY on interpersonal communication—procedure: a. Presenter asks participants to form three groups. Each group is asked to work with Reading A, B or C and the focus questions (Resource 4.7). b. Each group reads the extract and discusses the focus questions. c. The presenter then asks a spokesperson from each group to report back on their discussion. In the whole group, discuss and/or consider the similarities between Aboriginal communication styles and those of people from other non-European cultural backgrounds.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 4.7** Three Readings for Discussion; A, B and C
Implications of Value Systems for ALBE Programs	Group discussion *For this exercise you might like to use the Eades article as a handout. While this article refers to Aboriginal children in a primary school setting, the principles of communication also apply to adults.* 1. Discuss the possible implications for ALBE teaching and learning. 2. Suggest and elicit from the participants a range of strategies for the ALBE facilitator in terms of: a. group organisation b. curriculum design. 3. Consider other language factors which may need to be considered when working with Aboriginal people in an ALBE setting: • non-English speakers – local language, or – Kriol • non-standard English speakers – Aboriginal English – non-standard English • body language. Refer participants to the bibliography for this session. Ask them to bring to Session 5 one or more examples of their own daily use of maths, e.g. newspaper cuttings, bills, school reports.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 4.8** Bibliography for Session 4

Presenter's Background Note 4a to accompany Session 4

Within Aboriginal Australia there exists a continent of indigenous cultures whose members, on a linguistic continuum, may speak any one or more, of over 50 currently spoken traditional languages, any one of numerous Creoles, Aboriginal English, standard Australian English and often, any combination of the above.

The question is therefore, how does one address the subject of Aboriginal language use in any depth. Furthermore, what aspect or aspects of language are to be discussed?

- The answer to the first question has been addressed in that in order to be as inclusive as possible this activity will focus on the Aboriginal use of English, the language most commonly used (though in many cases not primarily used) by the majority of Aboriginal people. Further adding to the choice of English is that it is the language most used in situations of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal interaction.

- In regard to the second question, in this lesson the focus will be on the sociolinguistic use of English by Aboriginal people.

- The question arises as to whether the discussion of language use in this session is applicable to Torres Strait Islander people. My answer to that, as an Aboriginal person, is 'consult a Torres Strait Islander'. As an Aboriginal person I find it a difficult task to adequately discuss the language style of a continent of Aboriginal cultures, however I believe there are commonalities which can be examined. Unfortunately these of necessity can only be generalisations. It would be presumptuous of me as an Aboriginal person to include Torres Strait language and customs in this discussion.

While Aboriginal people may use English, they are very often using it in 'Aboriginal ways', ways which serve an important purpose in Aboriginal societies past and present, and ways which apply to Aboriginal communication regardless of the language or dialect in use.

Furthermore, as an Aboriginal person I am fully aware of the communication breakdowns which often occur in both urban and rural settings when members of one culture mistakenly presume, given the common language being spoken, that the members of the other culture operate on the same rules of communication as themselves.

Given therefore, that Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal miscommunication is a subject of more relevance to Aboriginal people and has greater daily impact upon Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal interaction, sociolinguistics or 'rules of communication' will be the focus of this activity.

Consequently, the activity presented here is centred on a study of North-Eastern Arnhem Land rules of interpersonal communication. While this is a study of a specific area, given the existence of an Aboriginal cultural commonality (as addressed in the suggested readings), the basic principles of communication discussed here would be recognisable to most Aboriginal people to varying degrees.

In using this activity facilitators need to be mindful of the diversity which exists within the commonality of the Aboriginal experience; for to deny that diversity is to stereotype Aboriginal people, while to deny the existence of a cultural commonality is to question the legitimacy of the notion of an 'Aboriginality', or an 'Aboriginal culture'.

Michael McDaniel
Lecturer, Aboriginal Studies
School of Adult and Language Education
University of Technology, Sydney 1995

Presenter's Background Note 4b to accompany Pre-Reading 4

Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication

- This reading discusses hypothetical situations in which Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals might interact, each operating from a different value system.

- While this reading is based on the culture of the Yolngu people (Aboriginal people of North-Eastern Arnhem Land) and while the contexts may vary, the communication styles discussed would be recognisable to varying degrees by most Aboriginal people, given the existence of a pan-Aboriginal value system.

Session Five

Language and Mathematics

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • understand that maths, like language, is one way of making sense of the world • explain the implications of this for the use of language in learning and teaching numeracy in ALBE • use this awareness of language to construct learning activities, which promote meaningful mathematical practices.
Pre-Reading 5	Pre-Reading 5 must have been sent to participants so that they can read it before the start of Session 5. Boomer G. 1986, 'From catechism to communication: language, learning and mathematics', *Australian Mathematics Teacher*, 42, pp. 2–7.
Suggested Time	2 hours
Materials	Pre-Reading 5 Session 5 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section pp. 121–133) Presenter's Background Notes 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d and 5e Whiteboard and pens Overhead projector, blank OHTs and pens

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
1. Introduction	Check that participants have read Pre-Reading 5 and have brought it. If not hand out copies of the section, 'Some Principles' for use later in this session. Present the learning outcomes for this session. *For the next segment read Presenter's Background Note 5a for your own preparation.*	**OHT Resource 5.1** Session 5 Learning Outcomes **Presenter's Background Note 5a**
What is maths? ***What is numeracy?***	Lead a discussion aiming to extract – a variety of experiences of maths and – definitions of maths and numeracy. Record the discussion on Resource 5.2. *As preparation, read Presenter's Background Note 5b.*	**OHT Resource 5.2** Questions for Discussion: *What is maths? What is numeracy?* **Presenter's Background Note 5b**
How might language be involved in making maths meaningful?	Ask participants to read Resource 5.3, allowing them sufficient time to do so.	**HANDOUT Resource 5.3** Focus Questions
What strategies could numeracy teachers use to make maths meaningful?	Lead a plenary discussion around the Focus Questions 1, 2 and 3.	

2. Language and Conceptual Understanding	Explain that the aim of the next section is to examine the relationship between formal mathematical codes and related everyday language and action.	
	Write on the board the following mathematical statement: 12–9 = 3	
	Ask the participants to write a very brief description of an everyday situation which illustrates the mathematical statement.	
	Ask participants to read out their descriptions in turn. As they do so, put their responses into categories on the board or OHP to show the participants' different interpretations of the statement.	**blank OHT**
	Through general discussion: • point out the two quite separate interpretations of the statement and • elicit from the participants the quite different physical gestures that accompany the idea of '*take away* ' and '*difference*.'	
	Make the points that – the two physical actions involved are very different and – if students are to make maths meaningful then language should match action and situation.	
	Explain – that it is common for teachers to teach subtraction via a *difference* situation, while using *take away* language (or vice versa) and – that this is conceptually very confusing.	**Presenter's Background Note 5c**
	Follow this up with the activity on Resource 5.5.	**HANDOUT Resource 5.4** *Which diagram? Which story?*
	Discuss other ways of linking language and conceptual development using the section titled 'Some Principles' from Pre-Reading 5 which is summarised on Resource 5.5.	**OHT Resource 5.5** Some Principles **Presenter's Background Note 5d**

3. Language and Socially Constructed Representation	Explain that the aim of this section is to raise awareness of differences in the organisation and representation of mathematics in different cultures, e.g. numeration systems.	
	Ask participants to read Resource 5.6. Ask participants in pairs: • to discuss the Harris extract, 'the word for five...' • • to consider whether counting is a universal activity and • to assess why some societies (e.g. ours) use counting more than others (e.g. traditional hunter-gatherer societies). Ask pairs to share their findings in a whole group discussion.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 5.6** 'the word for five...' Harris (1987)
	Allow time for the group to read the Denny extract on Resource 5.7. Lead a discussion on the main point: that there is a relationship between – the mathematical concepts used in a particular culture—such as 'value', 'amount', 'space' and 'measurement' and – the language generated to express those concepts.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 5.7** 'why count?...' Denny (1986)

4. Language and Critical Numeracy	Explain that the aim of this section is to explore how critical literacy and numeracy learning can be integrated through investigations into issues of importance to students. Display Resources 5.8 and 5.9. Ask the participants, as a whole group, to • look at Wallace's strategies for critical literacy awareness • rewrite the questions so that the focus is on mathematics and numeracy. • Ask them whether the questions are still relevant. Discuss. In small groups participants apply these questions to examples of the daily use of mathematics which they have collected (as requested at the end of the previous session, or brought by you, the presenter). For example: newspaper extracts bills school reports building plans. In addition ask them to consider these questions: • What maths is involved? • Is it used appropriately? Does it make sense? Is it accurate? • What "facts" are being used?… what ones ignored? • What maths learning could be developed from this resource?	**OHT Resource 5.8** Critical Literacy Awareness **(broad level)** **OHT Resource 5.9** Critical Literacy Awareness **(text level)**

Conclusion	Display Resource 5.10 and refer participants to the related handout. Summarise the role of language in maths by referring to Resource 5.10 with the three listed responses to the question: *'How might language be involved in making maths meaningful?'*	**OHT & HANDOUT Resource 5.10** Summary
	Refer participants to the bibliography for this session.	**HANDOUT Resource 5.11** Bibliography

Presenter's Background Note 5a

Notes for discussion of the questions:

What is maths? What is numeracy?

The discussion would aim to extract from the participants a variety of experiences and definitions of maths and numeracy.

For maths this would include:

1. maths as a set of symbols to be manipulated according to given rules
2. maths as a way of making sense of the world.

For numeracy this would include:

1. numeracy as low-level arithmetical competence
2. numeracy as at-homeness with the maths relevant to one's life.

The *first* of each pair emphasises the meaninglessness of much school maths.

The *second* points to the possibility of maths being, like language, a meaning-making system.

Presenter's Background Note 5b

Notes to accompany Resource 5.3

How might language be involved in making maths meaningful?

Deal with the overall question by developing partial answers.

These can be elicited by using Focus Questions 1, 2 and 3.

Focus Question 1

Meaning through language and conceptual understanding

- in changing the emphasis from instrumental to relational understanding
- in closing the gap between spontaneous and formal concepts of how the world works.

Focus Question 2

Meaning through language and socially constructed representation

- in fostering an understanding of mathematics as socially, humanly constructed.

Focus Question 3

Meaning through language and critical numeracy

- in creating an awareness of how mathematics is used for social control
- in using maths to understand, act within, and change the world we live in.

Presenter's Background Note 5c

An activity examining the relationship between formal mathematical code, action, and everyday language

This activity aims to ensure that participants come up with their own interpretations. This makes it likely that the ambiguity of the mathematical statement will emerge.

You should concentrate on two common situations. If one of them does not emerge as the activity proceeds, you may have to offer your own illustration.

Examples:

a. In the situation: 'I had $12, I spent $9, $3 was left,' the interpretation being given by the speaker to the original mathematical statement is, 'If you take 9 things away from 12 things, 3 are left'.

This is ***take away*** subtraction.

b. In the situation: 'My daughter is 12 years old, my son is 9, so my daughter is 3 years older,' the interpretation being given to the original mathematical statement is, 'the difference between 12 and 9 is 3'.

This is ***difference or comparison*** subtraction.

A Common Confusion:

Often students are asked to 'do' something like 12 – 9.

When they can't, you may hear a teacher—trying to use everyday materials and situations—say something like:

> '12 minus 9. What does that mean? ... yes, "12 take away 9". Look, you've got 12 books and I've got 9. What's the difference? ...yes, 3. So, 12 take away 9 is 3.'

The action is ***difference***.

The spoken words say ***take away***.

There is ***NO take away action*** in the whole procedure.

Presenter's Background Note 5d

Notes on Boomer's article

These are the categories in Boomer's article for the section titled 'Some Principles'. The words in bold face match the 8 headings Boomer used and are also printed on OHT Resource 5.5.

- **transformation** from one maths medium to another
- **translation** between formal code and everyday language (as in Resource 5.4)
- **guessing/hypothesising**...cf. 'miscue analysis'
- [teachers] **withholding**: to tell or not to tell?
- [students] **asking questions**
- **collaboration** … questions without embarrassment
- **formulating in talk and writing—communicating**
- and some **other principles**
    - reflection
    - negotiation
    - reading mathematical texts
    - attacking problems.

Session Six

Language and Critical Literacy/Numeracy

Learning Outcomes	In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module. In particular they will be able to: • synthesise their understandings of the role of language in ALBE practice • apply critical literacy/numeracy awareness to teaching/learning contexts.
Pre-Reading	There is no pre-reading for this session.
Suggested Time	2 hours
Resources	OHP, blank OHTs and pens Whiteboard and pens Session 6 Handouts and OHTs (in Resources Section, p.134) Multiple copies of a photograph from a current newspaper to use as Resource 6.2. Session 1 Resources 1.1 and 1.5
Preparation	Choose a photograph which shows the points brought out in **Presenter's Background Note 6a,** Reading Visual Texts. Paste it to the blank form, **HANDOUT Resource 6.2** before photocopying a set of Session 6 resources for each participant.

CONTENT	ISSUES and ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
The Issues So Far	Summarise the issues presented in the module so far, drawing on the themes identified at the end of Session One: - language and power - language and culture - language awareness and critical literacy/numeracy Review each topic in turn. Elicit from the group their understanding of the ways that these factors operate in the different contexts that have been presented.	
	Record the main points made on blank OHT.	**blank OHT**
What is critical literacy/numeracy?	Ask: How does this relate to critical literacy/numeracy?	
	'Talk through' Resource 6.1. Discuss.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 6.1** Critical Literacy and Numeracy
An Example of a Critical Literacy Activity	*One aspect of gender and representation will be discussed: agency.* Definition of agency (as in the Glossary, Resource 1.19): AGENCY: The capacity to act. Agency is unequally distributed in language as well as in other forms of representation, e.g. visual forms.	
Masculinity/ Femininity and Representation: towards a critical reading practice	Arrange the group in pairs to examine newspaper representations of gender. (See Preparation notes on page 61.) —continued on next page	**Presenter's Background Note 6a** Reading Visual Texts

Masculinity/ Femininity and Representation: (continued)	Ask each pair to study the photograph supplied on Resource 6.2. Ask participants to supply a caption that best represents what is going on in the photograph. Allow time for writing the captions on blank OHTs or butchers paper. WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION Discuss the captions and the photographic representations in terms of these questions: - Who is granted the agency in the photographs? - How does the agency in the photographic representation match the actual capacity to act in the story? - Who is granted the agency role in the captions? Are they different? How would you explain this? Conclude the activity by asking the participants to consider the question: How will you now begin to introduce critical understandings of literacy and numeracy in your teaching contexts? Record key suggestions on whiteboard or OHT.	**HANDOUT Resource 6.2** Masculinity/ Femininity and Representation **blank OHTs butchers paper** **blank OHT**
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY **Participants Plan their Assessment Tasks**	*This can be done in a variety of ways, depending on numbers of participants, how many have chosen Task One (classroom analysis) and how many have chosen Task Two (materials development). Continue for as long as time permits.* Divide participants into 2 groups and assign a facilitator to each group. Possible ways for participants to proceed include: – working in pairs discussing plans – individually developing an action plan – research in books available at workshop, if practical – questioning facilitator/presenter – studying copies of similar projects supplied by presenter.	**variety of resources**, e.g. books project reports butchers paper

Concluding the Module	Refer participants to – bibliography for Session 6, Resource 6.3 and – bibliography for Module 5, Resource 6.4.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 6.3** Bibliography for Session 6 **HANDOUT** **Resource 6.4** Bibliography for Module 5
	Ask participants to fill in the evaluation sheets. Collect the completed forms.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 6.5** Evaluation of Module 5
	Remind them to complete their self assessment process using the Participant's Profile: – column 2, straight after the program finishes and – column 3, in 3–6 months.	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.1** Participant's Profile
	Refer to Resource 1.5 again. Outline clearly the process – for completion and return of tasks for assessment of the learning outcomes and – for gaining the award for this module	**HANDOUT** **Resource 1.5** Assessment Overview for Module 5
	Give information about how long it will take for the process to be completed.	
	Thank participants for their part in the program.	

Presenter's Background Note 6a to accompany Resource 6.4

Reading Visual Texts

Focus attention on:

1 who is acting and who is being acted upon, and
2 the positioning of the participants in the picture.

Here it is useful to take a form of analysis of visual texts which divides the picture into a four-way grid: top left, bottom left, top right and bottom right.

- Basically, top left is the most 'important' position, reserved for the most prominent or important participants, while bottom right is the least important. This is partly because of the way we have learnt to read both verbal and visual texts: from the top.
- People who are represented as active, as doers, sayers, givers etc will characteristically be positioned on the left, or at the top, or both.
- Conversely, people who are represented as passive, and as recipients of the doing, saying, giving will be positioned on the right, at the bottom, or both.

Discuss with the group:

- What does this activity say about the notion of 'critical literacy'?
- In what sense is such reading of visual texts a critical literacy practice?
- Why might you do such an activity in an ALBE setting?

LANGUAGE
in ALBE Teaching and Learning

Resources

Contents

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Resource 1.1 **HANDOUT**

Participant's Profile

Please rate yourself against the learning outcomes on a scale of 0–6.
A rating of 0 signifies no experience or ability in the area.
A rating of 6 implies that you have a high level of skill.

Learning Outcomes	Before Workshop	After Workshop	3-6 Months Later
1 I can talk and write about language as social practice using appropriate and sound theoretical constructs.			
2 I can construct learning activities which promote the understanding of language as social practice in a range of teaching/learning contexts.			

Resource 1.2 **HANDOUT**

Module Purpose and Learning Outcomes

Module Purpose

To develop participants' understandings of language as social practice, using:

- particular sites, for example: ALBE in the workplace and in mainstream TAFE
- particular groups, for example: Aboriginal students
- particular disciplines, for example: literacy and numeracy.

To assist participants in their practice as teachers to:

- relate these broader understandings to ALBE teaching and learning situations;
- design teaching strategies and activities to develop ALBE students' understandings of language as social practice.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module the participants will be able to:

1 talk and write about language as social practice using the theoretical constructs presented in this program;

2 construct learning activities which promote the understanding of language as social practice in a range of teaching/learning contexts.

Resource 1.3 **OHT**

Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task One

- Make an audio-tape recording of a lesson (your own, or a colleague's) and transcribe a unified segment of about 10–20 minutes.

- Provide a description of the context. You may add handouts, examples of student writings and any other relevant materials.

- Analyse the language of the transcript and comment on such aspects as turn-taking, modality and polarity; the participants' roles; and power relations between participants.

- Comment on implications for improving your practice as an ALBE teacher.

Resource 1.4

OHT

Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task Two

- Develop the outline of a unit of work (3–6 hours).
- Show how it is informed by the understandings of language gained in this program. Include examples of actual learning materials and present the underlying theoretical framework.

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Resource 1.5 **HANDOUT**

Assessment Overview for Module 5

Assessment Task One

- Make an audio-tape recording of a lesson (your own, or a colleague's) and transcribe a unified segment of about 10–20 minutes.
- Provide a description of the context. You may add handouts, examples of student writings and any other relevant materials.
- Analyse the language of the transcript and comment on such aspects as turn-taking, modality and polarity;.the participants' roles and power relations between participants.
- Comment on implications for improving your practice as an ALBE teacher.

Assessment Task Two

- Develop the outline of a unit of work (3–6 hours).
- Show how it is informed by the understandings of language gained in this program. Include examples of actual learning materials and present the underlying theoretical framework.

Assessment Criteria

You should be able to:

1 take an active part in discussion of language as social practice using appropriate concepts and terminology with confidence;
2 analyse language as social practice through examining the way it is used in a range of teaching and learning contexts;
3 prepare teaching/learning materials which are clearly based on the understanding of language as social practice;
4 adopt new teaching strategies which draw on the theory of language as social practice.

Do one of the Assessment Tasks and return your work to the address below by the due date.

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

____

____

Return by date: ______________

Resource 1.6 **OHT**

Session 1 Learning Outcomes

Language as Social Practice

In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module.

In particular they will be able to:

- describe how language can be understood as social practice and
- apply this understanding to aspects of ALBE teaching.

Resource 1.7 **OHT**

Record of Brainstorm No. 1

What do we need to know about language?

Resource 1.8 **OHT**

Record of Brainstorm No. 2

Language is...

Resource 1.9 **HANDOUT**

What is language?

The commonsense assumption is that language enables us to express and share our ideas, that it is the vessel we fill with content of whatever kind. In that view, language is a neutral medium, transparent and unproblematic, and ideas have some other existence before they are encoded in language.

Kress (1988) p. 79

ABOVE ALL REMEMBER: Language is just a transport system for ideas—nothing more—a means to an end, not an end in itself. Your purpose is to convey to your reader as much as possible. That is the only reason you write. It is the only reason cultures create language.

Joseph (1981) cited in Yates (1991) p. 142

Language is a social phenomenon, and as such it is critically involved in the social construction of experience. It is because it is a social phenomenon that our language requires constant critique and challenge, for it is in such practices that many values and attitudes are constructed.

Christie et al. (1993) p. 6

Language is in fact very far from being a neutral carrier of meaning: it is language that constitutes meaning, and meaning is always and everywhere structured by differences of value systems and by differences of power.

Kress (1988) p. 79

Whereas in the past language education was often construed as teaching students how to decode and encode a medium of communication, there is now widespread consensus that language and literacy are integral to social life, and that language education is a matter of learning the ways of interpreting and constructing texts deployed within a domain of practice.

McCormack (1992) p. 35

When we look carefully at language, we see that language has the power to shape our experiences. Referring to Whorf's work, Dale Spender observes that 'language is not neutral. It is not merely the vehicle which carries ideas. It is itself a shaper of ideas.' (1980, p. 139) Like women, literacy learners need to become aware that language is not neutral. Language shapes their experiences and as a result their experiences need to be represented in language…

Spender (1980) cited in Gaber-Katz & Horsman (1989) p. 8

Resource· 1.10 **HANDOUT**

Language as Social Process

Fairclough argues that linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects... Social phenomena are linguistic, on the other hand, in the sense that the language activity which goes on in social contexts (as all language activity does) is not merely a reflection or expression of social processes and practices, it is part of those processes or practices. (1989, p. 23)

If we understand language as a social process then the production and consumption of language and thus of its manifestations, texts, are also social processes—they are what we describe as literacy practices. Reading a text will be a different kind of literacy practice depending on the context in which it is happening—who is reading it, for what purpose, who with and so on.

These variables, those related to the 'context of use' and the 'context of situation' (Halliday & Hasan, 1985) will of course also make the text a different text. Imagine the reading of a report of a football match in the offices of the winning and of the losing teams. Similarly writers will produce different texts for different audiences even though they may be ostensibly about the same session. Or the same text may be 'editorialised' for different audiences.

Reading then, as Freebody and Luke have argued, requires more than the ability to apply decoding skills to marks on paper, *reading is not a private act but a social practice, not a matter of individual choice or proclivity, but of learning the reading practices of an interpretive community*" (Luke, forthcoming, Freebody and Luke 1990). Reading requires the reader to ask a number of analytical questions of a text about how the reader and the world are positioned by the text (Kress, 1985).

As McCormack has pointed out, the reader needs to ask what the text is trying to do to him or her. The reader in the workplace needs to ask of a workplace text, where is this accident form positioning me, whose interests is it serving? (McCormack, 1992) The questions, 'What does this say?' or 'what am I trying to say?' when asked of the reading and writing process now appear more problematic than perhaps you may have thought. This construction of reading and writing also begs the question of how to do it. What tools of analysis are there to become a critical reader and critical constructer of texts whatever the 'level' of reading and writing ability?

From Wickert and Baynham (1994)

Resource 1.11 **HANDOUT**

Text A: Spoken

An Oral Complaint

x: Lennox Council. Can I help you?

y: Yes. I'm ringing up because I want to complain about the…um…recycling.

x: How can we help you?

y: Well in my street we have a normal service which collects the garbage, but once a month the… um…papers and bottles are collected on different days in the month. Now we have a special little timetable about when we're supposed to do that, but they're never collected on the right days, so they sit out in the street. The papers blow around, the bottles aren't collected. It looks really untidy. So I'm…I'm complaining because they're not picked up on the dates that they say on the special little calendar that the Council's given us.

x: All right. What I'll have to do is to give you the phone numbers of the relevant contractors and you will have to contact them direct. Just hold on. The number for the paper collection is 632 4545, and the number for the glass collection is 789 5643. OK?

y: Yeah. Thank you. Bye.

Resource 1.12 **HANDOUT**

Text B: Written

Letter of complaint

The Town Clerk
Lennox Council
Lennox 2889

Oct 11 1994

Dear Sir

I am writing to complain about the inefficiency of the Council's recycling service.

There is a twice weekly garbage collection in our street and a paper and bottle collection four days per month.

A recycling service timetable has been distributed by the Council to inform residents of collection dates for their street. However, it appears that the actual bottle and paper collections take place up to three or four days later than the date stated on the calendar. This results in papers blowing around and the risk of broken glass lying about. The untidiness is a disgrace.

Could the Council please make sure that, in future, the collections are made on the stipulated dates?

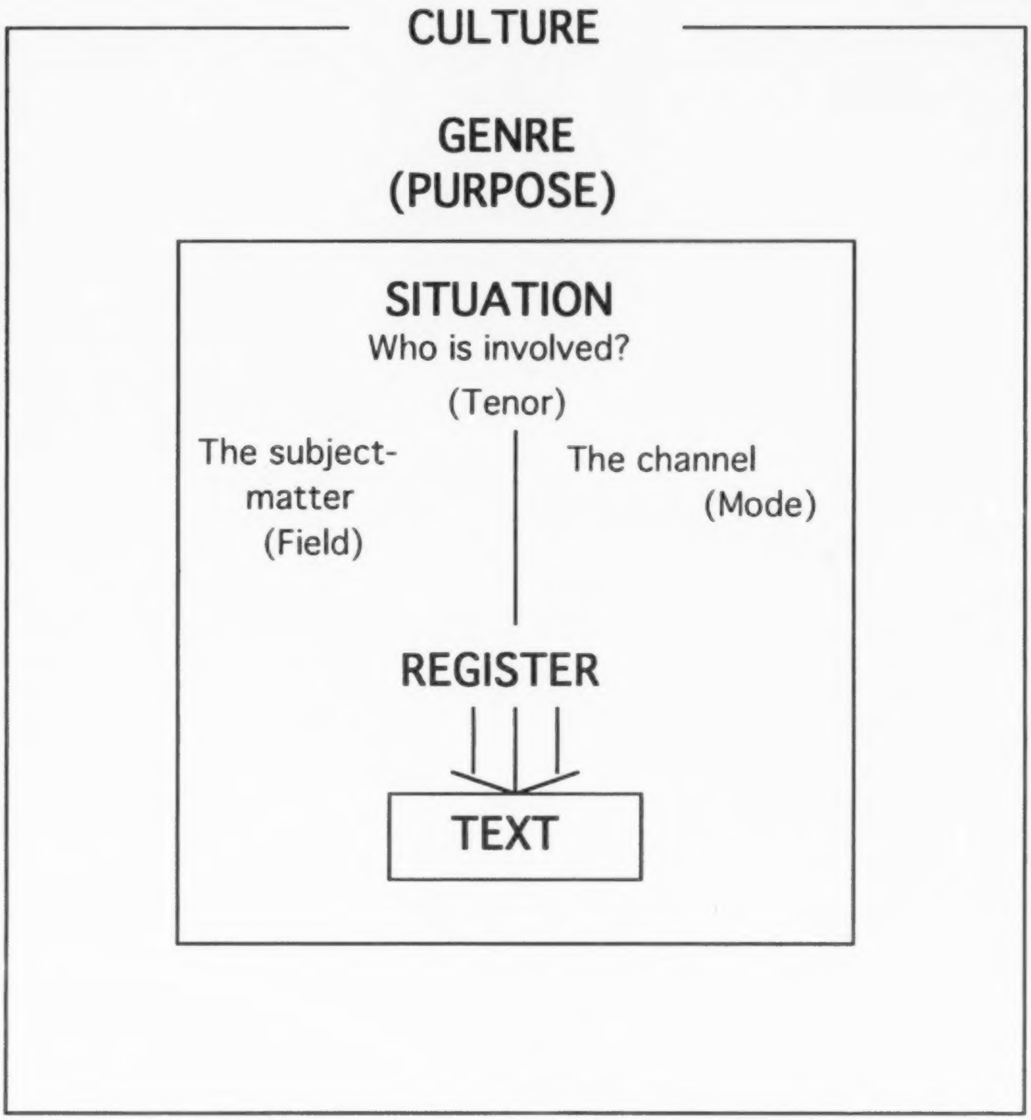
Yours sincerely,

Jane Jenks

Disgruntled resident and voter

Resource 1.13 OHT

Systemic Functional Model of Language



CULTURE

GENRE
(PURPOSE)

SITUATION
Who is involved?
(Tenor)

The subject-matter
(Field)

The channel
(Mode)

REGISTER

TEXT

from Derewianka (1990) in J. Hammond et al. (1992) p. 1

Reproduced from Resource 10 of Module 4:
Linking Theory and Practice

Resource 1.14 **HANDOUT**

Text C

From Spoken to Written Language

Spoken Language

A: Take these as well.
B: Are you sure they'll fit?
A: Yeah, chuck 'em in.
B: What if they break?
A: Doesn't matter—they all get broken up in the end.

Written Language

The Council is helping preserve the environment.

You can help by:

1. noting which days your glass and paper will be collected
2. placing your glass and paper on the footpath in the container provided
3. collecting any glass and paper which has been missed and saving it until the next collection time.

Very Written Language

The Council's recycling service operates on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month.

Glass and paper products only.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Resource 1.15 **HANDOUT**

Role Play Scenarios

1 You are a parent with a small child at a local child care centre. The management committee has discovered you are a literacy teacher. They've asked you to present a session about reading at the next open night.

- *How would you introduce this session?*

2 You are presenting a session to a group of part-time teachers who are doing a personal development course on Adult Literacy. In one part you will be covering some quite complex theoretical principles.

- *How would you introduce this part of your session?*

3 You are working with a group of young unemployed students and they've been showing little interest in you, or your efforts to teach them. You think that your 'adult' teaching approach may not be suiting this group. You decide to have another go at motivating them to do some work.

- *How would you introduce this session?*

4 You are a part-time teacher in TAFE. Your supervisor has been helping you with a university assignment and she wants you to talk about this work to your colleagues at the next staff meeting.

- *How would you introduce this talk?*

5 You are meeting a new group of ABE students for the first time.

- *How would you start this session?*

6 You are presenting a paper at the State Adult Literacy and Numeracy Conference.

- *How would you begin this presentation?*

Resource 1.16 **OHT**

Record of Role Play Discussion

Resource 1.17 **HANDOUT**

Summary of Session 1

Language as Social Practice

In this session we have started to understand language as social practice through critically analysing our teaching/ and learning practices in ALBE.

In the following sessions we will strengthen that understanding through specific focus on:

- language and gender
- language in the workplace
- Aboriginal language use
- language and maths.

We will draw out inter-related themes of:

- language and power
- language and culture
- language awareness and critical literacy/numeracy.

Resource 1.18 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 1.19
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Glossary

AGENCY	The capacity to act. Agency is unequally distributed in language as well as in other forms of representation, e.g. visual forms.
EXCHANGE	The minimal unit of interactive discourse. For example, teacher-fronted classroom discourse is often analysed as having the following exchange structure: *Teacher:* Initiation ('What's ten per cent of a hundred?') *Student:* Response ('Ten'). *Teacher:* Feedback ('That's right!') An exchange is made up of MOVES.
FIELD	See REGISTER.
GENRE	Genres are text types which evolve in a culture and serve a social purpose.
LEXIS	The whole body of words in a language. We can refer to the lexis of a particular text.
MODALITY	See Resource 2.5; see also POLARITY.
MODE	See REGISTER.
MOVE	Components of an exchange. For example under EXCHANGE above, Initiation, Response and Feedback are all MOVES.
NOMINALISATION	A feature of written language which turns verbs, i.e. actions (and sometimes other parts of speech) into nouns, i.e. things. Nominalisation allows a writer to pack more lexical content into a clause or sentence. For example, the second sentence below is a nominalised version of the first sentence: – *They agreed unanimously to build a playground.* – *There was unanimous agreement for the building of a playground.*

Resource 1.19
(page 2)

HANDOUT

Glossary (continued)

PRIMARY KNOWER	The participant is perceived to have control of the knowledge in an EXCHANGE where knowledge or information is being transferred.
REGISTER	How language varies according to context and purpose. Systemic theory identifies three major inter-related register variables: FIELD: how language constructs what is going on—realised in terms of IDEATIONAL meanings TENOR: how language constructs relations among interactants—realised in terms of INTERPERSONAL meanings MODE: how language the texts in a situation—realised in terms of TEXTUAL meanings.
SECONDARY KNOWER	The role assigned in the EXCHANGE to the participant to whom knowledge or information is being transferred.
TENOR	See REGISTER.
TURN-TAKING	One main characteristic of conversation. For example: One participant A talks, stops; another, B, starts, talks, stops. So we obtain an A – B – A – B – A – B distribution of talk across participants. However, in actual speech, turn–taking is more complex. For example, speakers may overlap. The A – B – A – B – A – B structure is more typical of dialogue in a drama script. From Levinson, Stephen C. 1983, *Pragmatics*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Resource 2.1

OHT

Session 2: Language and Gender

Learning Outcomes

In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module.

In particular they will be able to:

- demonstrate the gendered nature of language practices
- apply this understanding to ALBE teaching
- critically examine their own and their students' speech practices in terms of gender power relations.

Resource 2.2

OHT

Gender Issues in Spoken Language

Advice to Lawyers

Be especially courteous to women…

Avoid making women cry.
'A crying woman does your case no good.'

Women behave differently from men and this can sometimes be used to advantage.

'Women hate to say yes...an intelligent woman will very often be evasive. She will avoid making a direct answer to a damaging question. Keep after her until you get a direct answer—but always be the gentleman.''

Resource 2.3 OHT

Record of Discussion

How has gender mattered in your teaching?

Resource 2.4 **OHT**

Modality and Polarity in Spoken Language

Excerpt from courtroom transcript containing modalised speech:

L: State whether or not, Mrs W., you were acquainted with or knew the late Mrs E.D.

W: Quite well.

L: What was the nature of your acquaintance with her?

W: We were, uh, very close friends. Uh, she was even, sort of, like a mother to me.

This excerpt is taken from research on courtroom language carried out by William O'Barr and Bowman K. Atkins.

Resource 2.5 **OHT**

Modality and Polarity in Spoken Language

Rewritten sequence without modality:

L: State whether or not, Mrs W., you were acquainted with or knew the late Mrs E.D.

W: Yes, I did.

L: What was the nature of your acquaintance with her?

W: We were close friends.
She was like a mother to me.

Resource 2.6 **HANDOUT**

Modality and Polarity in Spoken Language

Excerpt from courtroom transcript containing modalised speech:

L:	State whether or not, Mrs W., you were acquainted with or knew the late Mrs E.D.
W:	Quite well.
L:	What was the nature of your acquaintance with her?
W:	We were, uh, very close friends. Uh, she was even, sort of, like a mother to me.

Rewritten sequence without modality

L:	State whether or not, Mrs W., you were acquainted with or knew the late Mrs E.D.
W:	Yes, I did.
L:	What was the nature of your acquaintance with her?
W:	We were close friends. She was like a mother to me.

The excerpt (in the first box) was taken from research on courtroom language carried out by William O'Barr and Bowman K. Atkins.

Resource 2.7 **HANDOUT**

Definitions and Discussions of Modality and Polarity

'**Modality**...is the variety of means by which one can say something a little short of indicating that something categorically is, or is not, the case.'
Poynton 1985, *Language and Gender: Making the Difference*, p. 71

To say that something categorically is, or is not the case is **polarity**.

Polarity refers to an absolutely positive or an absolutely negative statement.

Modality is the range of shades of meaning between positive and negative expressing degrees of probability, usualness or frequency, obligation and inclination.

Modality is to do with the speaker or writer's authority.

Modality choices tell us about the degree of certainty or 'truth value' speakers or writers hold about what they are saying or writing.

Modality choices also tell us about the kinds of power relationships assumed by speakers or writers both in terms of the 'topic' and the 'audience'. They carry important information about the stance and attitude of the sender

- to the message and
- to the audience.

All messages choose some degree of **modality**.

Resource 2.8 **HANDOUT**

Lakoff's 'Categories of Women's Language'

1 Hedges: *'It's sort of hot in here...',*
'I'd kind of like to go...',
'I guess...''
'It seems like...' and so on.

2 (Super) polite forms:
'I'd really appreciate it if...'
'Would you please open the door, if you don't mind?'
and so on.

3 Tag question: *'John is here, isn't he?'* instead of
'Is John here?' and so on.

4 Speaking in italics: intonational emphasis equivalent to underlining words in written language; emphatic ***so*** or ***very*** and so on.

5 Empty adjectives: *divine, charming, cute, sweet, adorable, lovely,* and so on.

6 Hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation: bookish grammar; more formal education.

7 Lack of sense of humor: women said to be poor joke-tellers and to frequently miss the point in jokes told by men.

8 Direct quotations: use of direct quotations instead of paraphrases.

9 Special lexicon: in domains like colors where words like *magenta, chartreuse* and so on are typically used only by women.

10 Question intonation in declarative contexts.
For example, in response to the question,
'When will dinner be ready?'', an answer like
'Around 6 o'clock?',
as though seeking approval and asking whether that time will be okay.

From Lakoff, R. 1975, *Language and Women's Place*, Harper & Row, New York, cited in W. O'Barr & B. Atkins 1980 (see Bibliography, p.101).

Resource 2.9 **HANDOUT**

Turn-Taking and Topic Choice

1 How do the findings of the research in Fishman's work relate to your perception of interactions between:
- you and your superiors, peers and subordinates in your workplace?
- you and your female students, and you and your male students?
- your students among themselves?

2 How would you account for any differences between your experiences and Fishman's research?
For example,
- male teachers in a 'feminised' workforce
- gender–aware senior management
- relative powerlessness of many ALBE students, including males.

Resource 2.10
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Verbal Interactions

Fragment from an integrated literacy and numeracy class

Dave: Trouble is, most people have the biggest meal last thing at night.

Jo: Yeah.

Dave: Instead of having your biggest meal—

Jo: Lunchtime.

Dave: Well, at morning, then you've got the energy all day.

Jo: Yeah.

Dave: See, when you have a meal your body only takes thirty-two percent of the protein at that one meal. That's why body builders have five or six meals a day.

Jo: Yeah, same as jogging.

Dave: Yeah, then you're getting protein all day in small proportions.

Belmont SkillShare, WA, 1992

Resource 2.10
(page 2)

HANDOUT

Verbal Interactions

Excerpts from Year 11 Geography Class:
small group discussion on climate controls

Michael: Hey. Wait. Wait! What's the climate control for Melbourne? Let's work that out first.

Gerard: Yeah.

Michael: What do you…?

Mandy: How can you do that if you don't even know what the *effects* are? There's the effects there. That little bit.

Michael: You think you got…so…I'd just be quiet if I was you.

Andrew: [from adjacent group, 'stirring' Michael; unclear]

Michael: [loudly] Pardon? Mmmm…Mmmm…

[All read]

Mandy: Why don't you just read it?
If you just read it from there?

Gerard: Leave the kid alone.

Resource 2.11 OHT

## Discussion

Primary and Secondary Knowers

- How is 'primary knower' status determined?
- How do the other 'actors' who are not accorded 'primary knower' status behave? How many other positions are there?
- What interpretations can you give to the distribution of 'primary knower' status?
- How do you understand the distribution of 'primary knower' status in your teaching context?

Resource 2.12 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 3.1

OHT

Session 3: Language in the Workplace

Learning Outcomes

In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module.

In particular they will be able to:

- explain the implications, for language teaching, of changing social processes in the workplace
- construct teaching activities which promote the understanding and use of language appropriate to the workplace.

Resource 3.2 **HANDOUT**

Case Study 1: Description of a Workplace

The work site is one location of a large food manufacturing company which is undergoing considerable pressure to increase productivity and to develop new products.

The current workforce has been employed for many years and comprises predominantly female operators and predominantly male management. Operators and first line supervisors have either a non-English speaking background or have an English speaking background with minimal education and formal training experiences.

Several changes are being made in order to streamline production and work organisation. These include the introduction of new technologies and team work and an accompanying increase in the amount of training. Training is sometimes 'out-sourced', i.e. it is delivered by external consultants, while at other times it is delivered in-house and on-the-job. Also quality-control responsibilities are being devolved, increasing the responsibility of operators. All work organisation and performance are determined by strict operating regulations in line with national regulations.

Implementation of the enterprise agreement is about to begin, following a lengthy difficult consultative process.

The factory is a non-smoking workplace, although a smoking room has been allocated. There is a canteen and a shop that sells 'seconds' to employees.

Printed by permission of the author, N. Solomon, UTS, 1994

Resource 3.3

OHT

Case Study 2: Literacy in the Workplace using Pre-Reading 3

Consider these questions which arise from Prince's article:

- What language and literacy issues are apparent in this workplace?
- How have 'new ways of working' in this workplace influenced the language demands of the workplace?

Resource 3.4 **HANDOUT**

Case Study 3: A Workplace Text

Overlapping Roles of Spoken and Written Language in the Workplace

E: What about if I could come back...ah...when the baby's about six months which is...

C: That's fine that's...

E: That's what I've been thinking you know six months is nice.

C : Six months is not too bad.

E: Not too bad.

E: You could do that that would give you six months left of the time 'cos the...ah...maximum period of time you can have off is normally twelve months.

E: ah…ah

C: If you come back...ah...after six months that means you've got six months...ah...six months left to be able to spread out on a part time basis.

E: So I can stay

E & C: {longer than the year.

C: So you can stay...you can probably stay for twelve months part time.

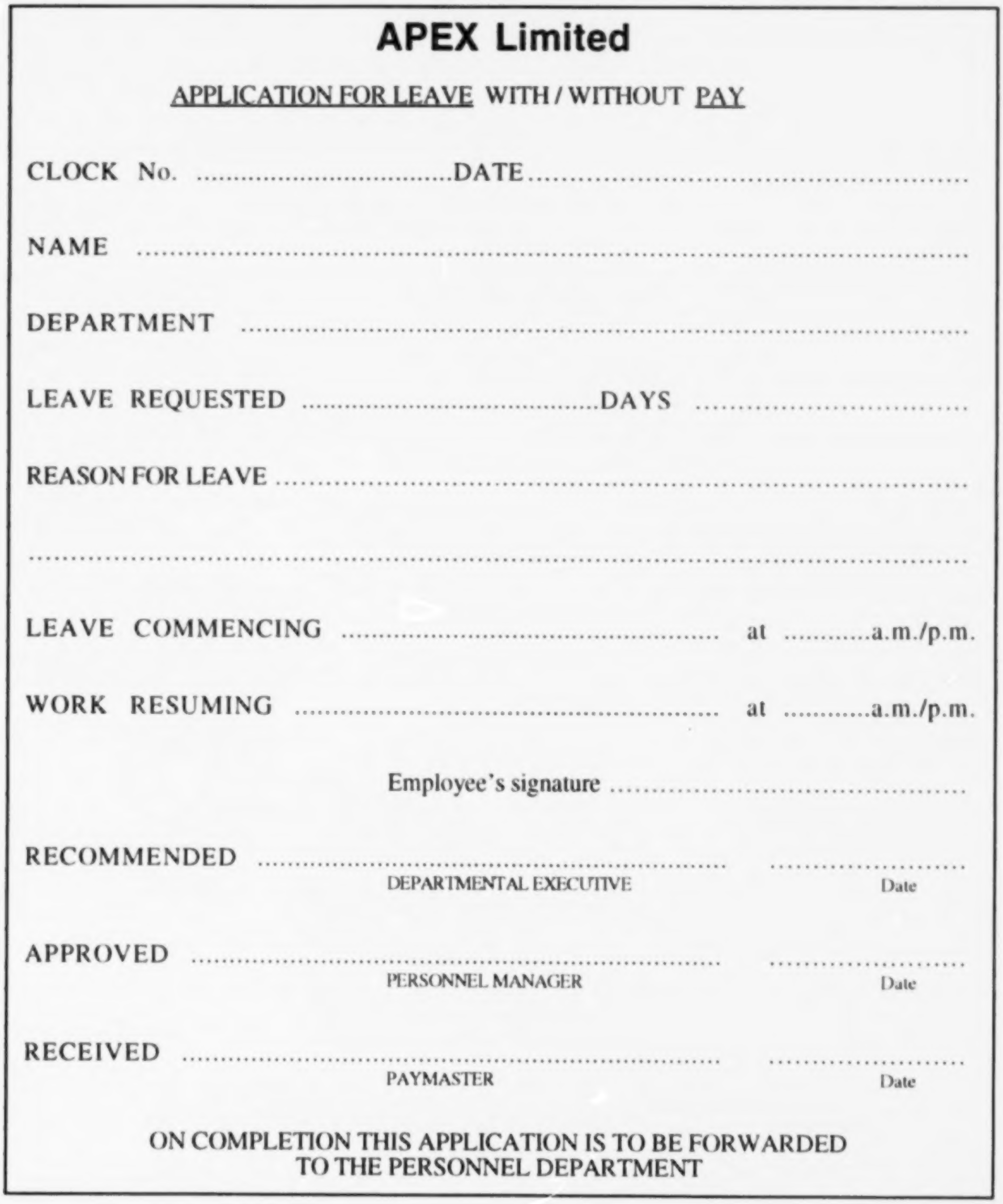
E: Part time which is…I think it's very good you know.

From Joyce, H. 1992, *Workplace Texts in the Language Classroom,* AMES NSW, p. 58.

Resource 3.5 **HANDOUT**

Sample Text: Application for Leave

This form is the basis for the oral exchange in Case Study 3 (Resource 3.4).



APEX Limited

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE WITH / WITHOUT PAY

CLOCK No. .... DATE ....

NAME ....

DEPARTMENT ....

LEAVE REQUESTED .... DAYS ....

REASON FOR LEAVE ....

....

LEAVE COMMENCING .... at ....a.m./p.m.

WORK RESUMING .... at ....a.m./p.m.

Employee's signature ....

RECOMMENDED ....
DEPARTMENTAL EXECUTIVE Date

APPROVED ....
PERSONNEL MANAGER Date

RECEIVED ....
PAYMASTER Date

ON COMPLETION THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE FORWARDED
TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Resource 3.6 **HANDOUT**

Oral Exchange in the Workplace

B: If we could start half an hour earlier than we do at present—that is a 6 o'clock start instead of a 6:30 start—Mark's got no objections to it and has left it up to us to decide whether we would do it or not—so it really entails a vote as to whether we do it, okay so—all those in favour at starting at 6—hands up—1, 2, 3, 4—

C: I think it is worth mentioning that from the packing point of view it would be better because we will start producing half an hour earlier, so really from a transportation point of view—less packing.

B: That's right—all those against—1, 2, 3.

K: Are there any real reasons—um—like in—inability to get in by that time or what?

B: Why do you not agree with it John? Any particular reason?

J: Not, not, nothing in particular—just don't agree with starting earlier that's all—I tend to—um, prefer my evening rather than my morning and it means that will disrupt my evening by half an hour (LAUGHTER) that's, that's my impression.

B: Okay—what about you Mick?

M: I'm exactly the same with John—just getting up in the morning. Also it's the coming in at 10 o'clock for night shift um—being here at 10—so like that take—like we're—now 10:30 it seems that I could still go and like—I can still go and see a movie. I can go to dinner. I can still do things and still be in at 10:30—where if it's 10 it just makes it that bit harder and as well as that it's also that being here at 6 o'clock in the morning...

C: That's a tall one, fellas.

M: You've seen me at 6:30—you know that's the truth of it—that's all I'm going to say—I just reckon it's going to be really hard.

A: Well—well, what we have to decide is whether it's going to be a unanimous vote, right, or we turn around and go for the majority

M: You got to be joking because I—I'm not changing. I don't want to change it, but like, if you go—you go it that's all—that's the story—I'm not—I don't—I don't want to start at 6 in the morning.

From Slade, D., Solomon, N., Joyce, H., Scheeres, H., Brosnan, D. & Nesbitt, C. 1994, *Oral Communication in the Restructured Workplace: Report and training modules on oral communication in team work, job performance and training*, Food Industry Language and Literacy Program (FILLIP)

Resource 3.7
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Beyond Plain English

Nicky Solomon, research manager, NLLIA Centre for Workplace Communication & Culture, University of Technology, Sydney, presents the Plain English movement in the context of changing management structures in the workplace.

In the rhetoric of restructuring, the changing distribution of knowledge and power results in write different relationships between readers, texts and writers. It makes a place where all can participate in work practices, a place for all to collaborate, interact and negotiate.

But to make the rhetoric a reality, participation requires information and the information needs to be accessible—in order to fulfil access and equity policy. In order to collaborate and negotiate, information needs to be open and opportunities for dialogue must be set up and fostered. In other words, communication is now central to new ways of working, learning and managing.

Plain English is a consequence of this shift. In striving for simplicity it responds to the access and participation issues that are integral to changing social practices. With its emphasis on using everyday language and familiar words, and on the personal, it duplicates the inter-personal dimension of spoken interaction. The Plain English advice to use *we* and *our* gives a sense of inclusion: an invitation to participate. All these features foreground the interpersonal and give an illusion of an exchange or dialogue in what is essentially a monologic text.

Plain English is a timely and legitimate response to the call to reflect on the way we communicate through written documents. Although the prime targets for Plain English are legal and bureaucratic documents, Plain English is also used in many others types of documents encountered by consumers, clients and employees. The promotion of Plain English has been greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm and the substantial gains made by Plain English initiatives need to be acknowledged. More importantly the information in a substantial number of documents is now accessible to many more readers.

Resource 3.7 **HANDOUT**
(page 2)

Beyond Plain English

Also Plain English marks a significant shift of responsibility from readers to writers in the information exchange process. Previously the responsibility for understanding a document lay with readers and the reason for lack of comprehension was blamed on readers' poor literacyskills. Now Plain English has become a literacy skill competency for writers. Writers, as they construct the document in a way that makes the information more accessible to the reader, have not only to be very skilled but also very conscious of their audience.

To work effectively within the initiatives of Plain English, we need to change our perception of it being merely an issue of language in a particular document. Rather we need to understand why it is an issue and to locate Plain English in its social context. Writers need to understand why written language is changing, and to appreciate the social factors that influence the technology of writing.

The following are some of the significant social changes that influence the languageof written documents:

- We live in an information age, i.e. we are immersed in information—a great deal of which we need to access in order to make decisions that allow us to participate effectively as consumers and workers.
- We live in a technological age, where machines are becoming smarter and with less human help, doing more in less time. Work is less manual and involves more thinking. In this context human interaction is a critical management and working tool. In addition technology has changed our information channels. For example, electronic mail and interactive modes of learning have resulted in more dialogue exchange, both written and pictorial or graphic. This will be even more so with the creation of the Information Superhighway.
- Niche marketing has led to an increase in client focus. Competition for markets means that information services and products need to address the specialised needs of customers and clients. Enterprises and bureaucracies therefore need to understand and get closer to their customers.

By increasing writers' awareness of the social context of a text, Plain English helps them to understand the purpose of the documents they are writing and the appropriate language choices to make. However, it is

Resource 3.7
(page 3)

HANDOUT

Beyond Plain English

unreasonable to expect Plain English documents themselves to solve the issues around effective communication. Written documents even with an injection of conversational language can't replace the speed or effectiveness of messages passed through face-to-face interactions in formal and informal networks. The social trend towards participation collaboration, negotiation and interaction places an emphasis on personal exchange, though the mode or channel through which it is mediated varies.

Consider for example this case study published in a report on piloting the Training Program of the Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: *Diversity Makes Good Business* (1993:52-3).

> The Australian Tax Office Dandenong is implementing a new communication strategy based on the idea of receiver-based communication where the message is made in the receiving. The emphasis is on oral communication and informal networks. To quote a senior manager, *'Tax thinks it communicates with paper. But it's just not true. Networks can be busted up, because they are spontaneous. If you want to get a message around, use the network.'* However this manager also recognises that many of the English speaking background employees are often not part of these networks and in any case the message comes through in idioms, colloquialisms and jokes -all of which exclude such employees. Consequently the more traditional channels of communication are also used. *People of non-English speaking backgrounds are open to information because they are trying to establish themselves. Ethnic people are the only ones who religiously read notice boards, for example. If you want to get a message through to them, this is all you have to do.'*

This multi-mode approach recognises the different ways information is accessed. The challenge for Plain English is to facilitate information exchanges so that participation and interaction can be a reality for all.

Solomon, N. 1994, 'Beyond Plain English', *Australian Style*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1 & 16

Resource 3.8 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 4.1 **OHT**

What are Value Systems?

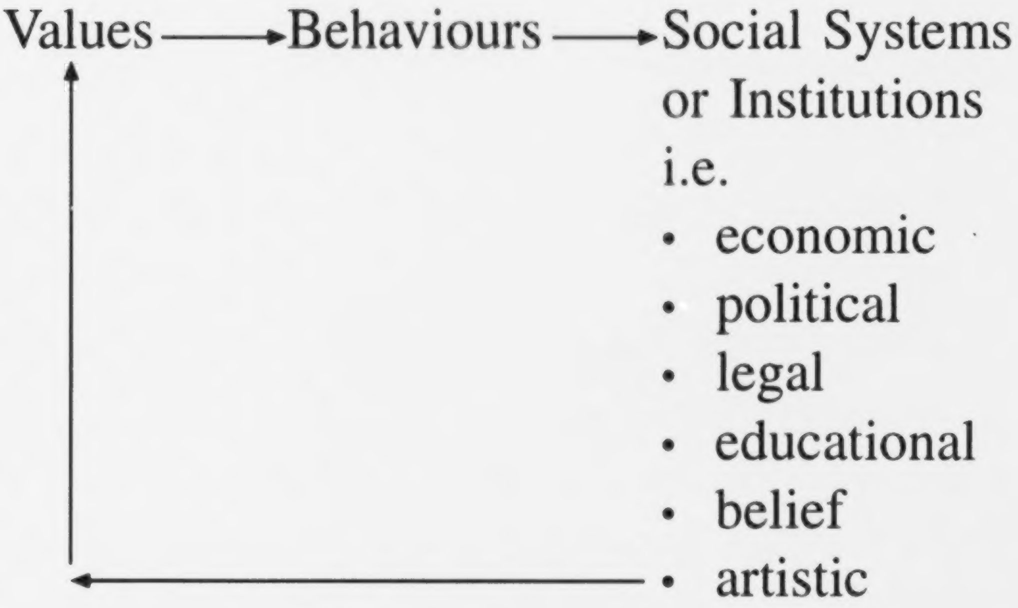
Value systems consist of a set of interconnected and mutually supportive values which in turn result in particular beliefs and behaviours. These beliefs and behaviours in turn serve to support social institutions which in turn maintain particular types of economic production.

Not only do they maintain the dominant means of production and preferred political order, these value systems also manifest themselves through the arts, language and spiritual beliefs of a society.

Therefore, observable differences between cultures, lie not in the adherence to different values, but rather in their different prioritisation of what are essentially the same values.

Resource 4.2 **OHT**

What Are Value Systems?
(continued)



Values → Behaviours → Social Systems or Institutions

i.e.

- economic
- political
- legal
- educational
- belief
- artistic

Resource 4.3 **HANDOUT**

What Are Value Systems?

Value systems consist of a set of interconnected and mutually supportive values which inturn result in particular beliefs and behaviours. These beliefs and behaviours inturn serve to support social institutions which inturn maintain particular types of economic production.

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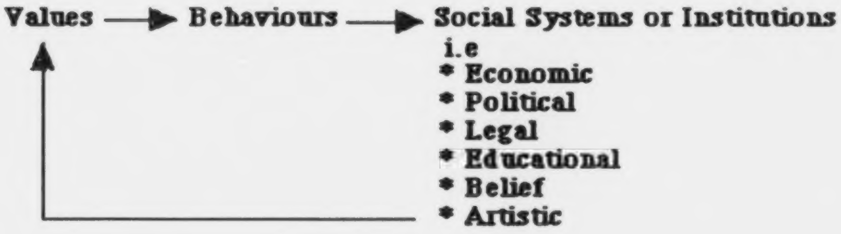
Values
Behaviours
Social Systems or Institutions
i.e
* Economic
* Political
* Legal
* Educational
* Belief
* Artistic

Resource 4.4 **OHT**

A Note on the Aboriginal Value System

While there are, and indeed have always been, many Aboriginal cultures, there is today, as there was in the past, a degree of Aboriginal cultural commonality; a pan-Aboriginal way of being. Much of this commonality of culture is due to the inheritance of a common hunting and gathering past.

Despite 200 years of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural contact (in many cases for fewer years than this), the Aboriginal value system or 'World View' has continued into present day rural and urban life for various reasons and with some adjustments.

While today not all Aboriginal people hold all of these values and beliefs, it is reasonable to say that most Aboriginal people will identify with many of them to varying degrees.

Resource 4.5 **HANDOUT**

Some Key Aboriginal Concepts and Values

Land	• Sacred and related. Viewed as spiritually animated.
Personal Identity	• Primarily determined by spiritual concepts and criteria, rather than genetically or genealogically determined.
Kinship	• Is extensive, as are material and non-material obligations and demands.
Continuity	• Emphasised, rather than innovation.
Conformity	• Emphasised, rather than individualism and liberalism.
Group Oriented	• Personal responsibilities emphasised, rather than individuals' rights.
Reservation and Circumspection	• Emphasised, rather than assertion, particularly in language style use, which tends to be very indirect. Especially where the communication involves a request or refusal; or is information seeking.
Non-Acquisitive	• Materialism is often discouraged.
Cooperation	• Emphasised, rather than competition.
Time	• More oriented to the present than to the future. The immediate and its agenda are prioritised above those of the future. Therefore, people are more task-directed and people-centred than time-directed.
Relatedness	• Holistic view and holistic understanding, rather than lineal and compartmentalised view or understanding.
Knowledge and Information	• They are not a right. Much is sacred and secret, and is the exclusive property of particular individuals and spiritual social divisions. Passage is also determined by age and sex. Can be 'sacred and secret' and therefore health- or life-threatening.
Authority	• Given by local or group consensus, as opposed to impersonal and institutionally awarded. Based on age and/or competence.

Resource 4.6 **HANDOUT**

Cross Cultural Communication: A Case Study

An English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who had been asked to run a cultural awareness training session for TAFE staff decided to make a video for use in that session. The video was intended to show some of the difficulties that new immigrants have in understanding the way of life in Australia.

The teacher decided to ask a student in the Advanced English class if she would be prepared to talk about her own experiences in encountering cultural differences in Australia. The student was a young woman who had trained as a doctor and done some tertiary level study of English in her home country. She was reasonably fluent in spoken English and seemed confident although quiet.

The teacher talked to the student at some length about the purpose of the video and the kind of information which would be most useful. The student hesitatingly agreed to be interviewed on videotape. A date was arranged.

The teacher booked the College studio, and arranged for the College technician to set up the equipment and lighting. However on the day of taping the student did not turn up. Nor did she telephone or notify the teacher that she wouldn't be coming. The teacher was confused and somewhat angry. The technician was frustrated at wasting his time.

A week later the student returned to the College unexpectedly and visited the teacher in her office. The teacher asked what had happened and why the student hadn't telephoned. The student looked down and smiled. She continued smiling as she said that she felt she couldn't say 'no' to the teacher; it would have been disrespectful. She felt awkward about talking about personal experiences and she hoped the teacher would have realised that by the way in which she had agreed. The student repeated that the most important thing to her was to please the teacher and pay respect.

This made the teacher more confused, but she couldn't stop to discuss the matter further as she had an appointment with another student. The teacher explained that she had to leave, but that it was important to talk more about the issue and perhaps see if there were other ways of recording the information. The student said, 'You ask me to talk about cultural difference, and I can say to you that what you are doing now would be very rude in my country. If someone comes to visit you, then you should stop other things and make them feel welcome. You do not leave them.'

'But what if you have appointments?' replied the teacher. 'You'll always be late.'

'OK,' said the student, 'so you are late.'

from Mitchell, R. 1987, *The Non-English Speaking-Background Learner in TAFE: A training handbook*, Adelaide College of TAFE, SA DETAFE, Adelaide

Resource 4.7
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Three Readings for Discussion

Reading A: The Role of Silence in Aboriginal Conversation

Silence is an important and positively valued part of many Aboriginal conversations. This is a difficult matter for most non-Aboriginal people to recognise and learn, because in Western societies silence is so often negatively valued in conversations. Between people who are not close friends or family, silence in conversations or interviews is frequently an indication of some kind of communication breakdown. On the contrary, in Aboriginal societies silences usually indicates a participants desire to think, or simply to enjoy the presence of others in a non-verbal way. Because Aboriginal people are so accustomed to using silence in conversation with other Aboriginal people, many are uncomfortable if they are not given the chance to use silence in their conversations or interviews with non-Aboriginal people.

This difference has serious implications for many interactions in mainstream Australian society where the question-answer method of seeking information is fundamental, such as employment interviews, doctor-patient interviews, school classrooms, and legal interviews, whether in the police station, the lawyer's office or the courtroom Aboriginal silence in these settings can easily be interpreted as evasion, ignorance, confusion, insolence, or even guilt. In Australian courts of law, silence is not to be taken as admission of guilt, but it would be difficult for police officers, legal professionals or jurors to set aside strong cultural intuitions about the meaning of silence, especially if they were not aware of cultural intuitions about the meaning of silence, especially if they were not aware of cultural differences in the use and interpretation of silence.

D. Eades (1993) p.

Reading A: Questions

1. In what ways does this relate to what you have learnt of Aboriginal value systems?
2. In what ways is this different from dominant Anglo discourse practice?
3. What value systems do you think underlie dominant Anglo discourse practices concerning silence?
4. In ALBE contexts, what are the implications of the role of silence in Aboriginal discourse practices?

Resource 4.7
(page 2)

HANDOUT

Three Readings for Discussion

Reading B: The Role of Questions in Aboriginal Language Use

When finding out information it is rude for Aboriginal people to ask questions. Instead the person who wants to find out about something gives some information that he knows (or guesses) and waits for the knowledgeable person to give some information in response. This style of finding out is based on a two-way process of sharing information and is much less direct than the White Australian way of asking questions. Also it often involves silence. Sometimes the information doesn't come till a later day. This use of silence and delays in information sharing makes many White Australians feel uncomfortable. There is a real cultural difference here. In White society a lot of silences are rude, people feel awkward and try to say something to avoid embarrassment. But in Aboriginal society silences are often important for people to think about things that have been said, or to wait for the right time to speak.

If we look now at the use of language to find out reasons for actions, we find further evidence of the indirectness in Aboriginal use of English. For me the most startling aspect of talking about reasons is that in the three years I have worked in South East Queensland I have never heard an Aboriginal person ask a why–information question. I have heard why–questions used as complaints (usually what–for), e.g. 'What are you going there for? We want to go straight home.' But never a direct question to find out the reason. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, many people must think that Whites are quite rude, asking why–questions. The right way for Aboriginal people to find out reasons for something is to find out the facts about what happened and put them together to understand the reasons. Take for example a family get-together a few months back. Several families arranged to meet at a house in Cherbourg. When the families coming from Brisbane arrived, Johnny, a teenager, had not come. A White relation, who wasn't brought up in the Aboriginal way, said, 'Why didn't Johnny come?' The kid's mother answered, 'He didn't want to', and the discussion ended. This conversation stuck in my mind because of the 'why' and I talked about it after to Michael Williams. He told me that in asking that why–question straight out, the White relation cut out the possibility of really finding out much at all. Michael suggested the following sort of conversation as being the appropriate Aboriginal way of finding out the same information.

continued on next page

Resource 4.7
(page 3)

HANDOUT

Three Readings for Discussion

Reading B: The Role of Questions in Aboriginal Language Use (continued)

'Johnny didn't come eh?'
'No, he decided to stop home.'
'Football on, was it?'
'Well there was football and I think his friends were going.'
'Oh, is that so-and-so and so-and-so?'
'Yes.'

Rather that an abrupt, direct 'why', the questioner needs to present some facts which he checks up on. He gathers together these facts and those he has observed. Then based on his knowledge of the people involved he interprets reasons. This indirect way of finding out reasons gives Aboriginal people an area of personal privacy. A person cannot be directly, openly questioned about his reasons or motives. In White Australian society the situation is quite different. It is acceptable to directly question a person about his reasons. But White Australians protect their protect their privacy by living rather private lives and not being able to observe many comings and goings of others. Aborigines, on the other hand, live very close lives where people's actions are often open to view. The way their privacy is protected is through the indirect use of language in finding out reasons.

D. Eades in M Christie (ed) 1992 p.

Reading B: Questions

1 In what ways does this relate to what you have learnt of Aboriginal value systems?
2 In what ways is this different from dominant Anglo discourse practices?
3 What value systems do you think underlie questioning in dominant Anglo discourse practices, for example, in a classroom or a law court?
4 In ALBE contexts, what are the implications of the role of questioning in Aboriginal language use?

Resource 4.7
(page 4)

HANDOUT

Three Readings for Discussion

Reading C: Commitment to Future Arrangements in Aboriginal Discourse Practices

If a Yolngu agrees on Friday that he will go fishing with you on Saturday morning and does not turn up, is he being rude to you?

From a Yolngu attitude to verbal commitments, No. If it were always the Balanda-initiated verbal agreements that the Yolngu did not adhere to, the explanation would probably be that Yolngu dislike verbal confrontations and as a consequence frequently say 'what the Balanda wants to hear'. But many of the instances of failure to meet verbal commitments involve Yolngu-initiated commitments. A deeper analysis reveals that from a Yolngu point of view, there need be no direct connection between what he does and what he promised to do. Also, from his point of view, it seems very strange behaviour to carry out a commitment to a pleasure, if what looked like a pleasure yesterday has turned into a chore today. He is much more pragmatic in his reaction to present circumstances and in this context less governed by what the Balanda call 'principles of keeping to your word'. What his behaviour really means is that 'extenuating circumstances' become valid at a different level for him than for the Balanda. For example, if a Balanda failed to make it to a fishing trip he had committed himself to because he broke his ankle, this would be considered as valid 'extenuating circumstances'. In contrast, if your potential Yolngu friend agreed on Friday night to go fishing on Saturday, but on Saturday morning feels very tired, that tiredness probably qualifies in his value system as 'extenuating circumstances'. A Balanda will often, without thinking, interpret this difference between the two value systems as rudeness on the part of the Yolngu.

Also, Aborigines tend to live in two fairly clearly separated domains of behaviour (which are supported by domains of language, domains of values, domains of different orientation to time, etc.). One of these domains is the Balanda world of technological work, cash economy, attendance of school, and clocks, etc.: and the other is the Yolngu world of relatives, close social atmosphere, independent choice of action and a more casual attitude to time, etc. One of the effects on the Yolngu of living in these two domains of behaviour is that a commitment made in one domain fades (sometimes into insignificance) when viewed from the other domain. The Yolngu domain is still by far the stronger in terms of values and definitions of social responsibilities, and so often wins over commitments made in the Balanda domain.

Resource 4.7
(page 5)

HANDOUT

Three Readings for Discussion

Reading C: Commitment to Future Arrangements in Aboriginal Discourse Practices (continued)

> If you 'followed up' your Yolngu friend in the camp and said, 'What about our arrangement?' you would probably get some cooperation, but that involves a new pressure and not what is being discussed here. And of course, if the verbal commitment involves something that is personally important to the Yolngu, one that still seems important on Saturday morning that is, he will meet it. But it remains true that one of the hardest features of Yolngu behaviour for the new Balanda to get used to is their frequent failure to link verbal commitments to actual behaviour at all kinds of levels—from fishing trips to important political decisions made in the community by the Yolngu themselves. It is because of behaviour like this that the Yolngu gain the reputation among Balanda of being very subjective people and 'living in the present'.
>
> *S. Harris (1987) p.*

Reading C: Questions

1 In what ways does this relate to what you have learnt of Aboriginal value systems?
2 In what ways is this different from dominant Anglo discourse practices?
3 What value systems do you think underlie dominant Anglo discourse practices concerning
   - accepting invitations or
   - agreeing to do something with someone at a future point in time?
4 In ALBE contexts, what are the implications of Aboriginal discourse practices relating to commitment to future arrangements?

Resource 4.8 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 5.1 **OHT**

Session 5 Learning Outcomes

Language and Mathematics

In this session participants will develop skills related to the learning outcomes for this module.

In particular they will be able to:

- understand that mathematics, like language, is one way of making sense of the world
- explain the implications of this for the use of language in learning and teaching numeracy in ALBE
- use this awareness of language to construct learning activities which promote meaningful mathematical practices.

Resource 5.2 **OHT**

Questions for Discussion

What is maths?

What is numeracy?

Resource 5.3
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Focus Questions

Focus question 1:

How might language make maths meaningful in terms of conceptual understanding...?

What Douglas Barnes, well-known in English teaching circles has called *school knowledge,* being academic and not related to life problems, Richard Skemp, a mathematician, has termed *instrumental* understanding. Barnes' *action knowledge*, by contrast, is akin to Skemp's *relational* understanding, in which understood principles are applied to solve unforeseen problems. Mathematics teachers clearly face the challenge of changing a subject traditionally built on 'instrumental' understanding to one where students come to understand 'relationally'.

Boomer, G. 1986, 'From catechism to communication: language, learning and mathematics', *Australian Mathematics Teacher*, 42.

Vygotsky had distinguished two basic forms of experience, which give rise to two different, albeit related, groups of concepts: the 'scientific' and the 'spontaneous'. Scientific concepts arise in the highly structured and specialised activity of classroom instruction and impose on a child logically defined concepts; spontaneous concepts emerge from the child's own reflections on everyday experience. Vygotsky made it a point to argue that scientific concepts, far from being assimilated in a ready-made form, actually undergo substantial development, which essentially depends on the existing level of a child's general ability to understand concepts. This level of comprehension in its turn, is connected with the development of spontaneous concepts. Spontaneous concepts, in working their way 'upward', toward greater abstractness, clear a path for scientific concepts in their 'downward' development toward greater concreteness.

Kozulin, A. in the introduction to Vygotsky, L. 1934, trans. 1986, *Thought and Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., p. xxxiv.

Resource 5.3
(page 2)

HANDOUT

Focus Questions (continued)

Focus question 2:

How might language make maths meaningful in terms of socially constructed representation...?

The history of mathematics...is like some pastiche of a '30s school history. It's all kings and queens, except in our case it's all kings: Euclid, Fibonacci, Descartes, Pascal, Newton. Where is the social history of mathematics? These people did not just jump out of a bathtub or from a gaming table and start having amazing insights. They created mathematics which echoed the concerns of the society around them. The patrons of Galileo and other dynamics theorists were in the business of wiping out fellow human beings with the help of more accurate siege gun trajectories. There is blood on the face of mathematics.

Stanfield-Potworowski, J. 1988, 'Socialising mathematics', *Mathematics Teaching*, 125, pp. 3–8.

Focus question 3:

How might language make maths meaningful in terms of critical language and critical approaches to numeracy...?

Mathematical skills for empowerment means far more than the ability to calculate. It means developing the ability to grapple with a problem until we come to a critical understanding of it. It means learning to create as well as to solve problems, to ask questions, to gather and extract useful information, to criticise assumptions, and to use numbers to support or refute opinions. It means learning to cooperate and share ideas, and to place the mathematical component of a problem in a meaningful context. It means owning all aspects of the learning experience.

Webber, V. 1988, Maths as a subversive activity, *Education Links* 32, pp. 6–9.

Resource 5.4 **HANDOUT**

Which diagram? Which story?

All the situations on this page, both stories and diagrams, concern the subtraction 7 – 4.
Look at the diagrams (a), (b), (c) and (d) and match:

- the two stories (given to you in **A** and **B**) to two of the diagrams and
- write your own stories (on the blank lines) for the other two diagrams.

A: *Take-away* subtraction

Diagram (……) matches: 'I had $7. I spent $4. How much did I have left?'

Diagram (……) matches: ______________________________

____

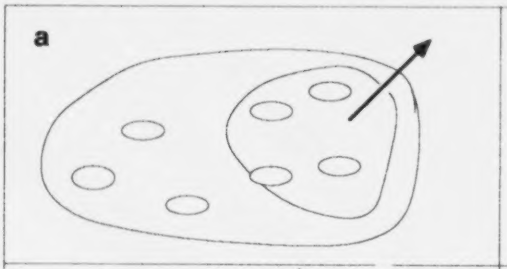
B: *Difference* or *comparison* subtraction

Diagram (……) matches: 'By road, it takes 7 minutes to get from the station to the hospital. If you take the shortcut through the park it only takes 4 minutes. How much longer does it take by road?'

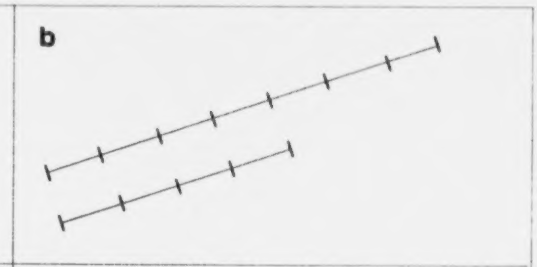
Diagram (……) matches: ______________________________

____

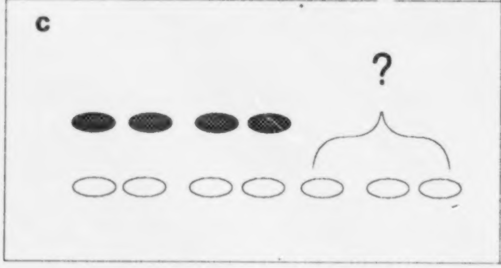
a



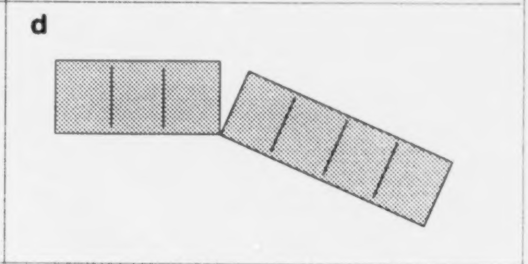
b



c



d



Learners often have difficulties with the ***comparison/difference*** type problems, especially if they have almost always been given take-away illustrations. One reason may be that the language of 'longer', 'greater', 'more' suggests the use of addition. It is therefore important for students —and teachers—to check the meaning of the problem, and whether the answer makes sense.

Some Principles

1 transformation from one maths medium to another

2 translation between formal code and everyday language

3 guessing/hypothesising...
cf. ‘miscue analysis’

4 withholding: to tell or not to tell?

5 asking questions

6 collaboration … questions without embarrassment

7 formulating in talk and writing—communicating

8 and some other principles, e.g.
   - reflection
   - negotiation
   - reading mathematical texts
   - attacking problems.

Resource 5.6 **HANDOUT**

The word for *five* ...

The rich and interesting field of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mathematical concepts has been generally ignored by anthropologists, linguists and other researchers. Some mathematical knowledge has been lost forever, particularly where English or English-derived terms have replaced traditional terms. Much knowledge remains however, where traditional languages are still spoken, and much can still be studied by those who are prepared to question the false and misleading generalisations in the literature…

Researchers, not all of them in the past, have generally taken absence of verbalisation to mean absence of counting, so we find the literature full of false statements:

> *in various...parts of Australia, the natives show habitual uncertainty as to the number of fingers they have on a single hand.* [Smith 1923:7]

Smith obtained his information on Australia from Crawford(1863). It is easy to see how, with poor ethnology and preconceived low expectations this misconception was reached. In many Aboriginal languages the word for five *is* 'hand'. Asked how many fingers they have, apart from finding it a stupid question (who doesn't know that?), these Aboriginal people would hold up five fingers. This would not be accepted by the researcher who would try to elicit a verbal response, which could only be hand. It is the researcher who is ignorant, not the informant…

Harris, J. 1987, 'Australian Aboriginal and Islander Mathematics', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 2

Resource 5.7 **HANDOUT**

Why count...?

Counting, says Denny (1986), serves as a way of 'apprehending objects which cannot be perceptually or conceptually identified'.

He describes a court case about land rights where an Inuit hunter was unable to say how many rivers were in the disputed area, a failure which was taken by the opposition as clear evidence that the man was unfamiliar with the region. In fact, the man probably knew the actuality of each river, of each bend of each river. There was no use in knowing the number of them. The point of the story, says Denny, is that we count things when we are ignorant of their individual identity—this can arise when we don't have enough experience of the objects, when there are too many of them to know individually, or when they are all the same, none of which conditions obtain very often for a hunter...[whereas] articles in industrial society often cannot be individualised because they are identical—all one can do is count.

From Denny, P. 1986, 'Cultural Ecology of Mathematics: Ojibway and Inuit hunters', in *Native American mathematics*, ed. M. Closs, University of Texas Press, Austin.

Resource 5.8 **OHT**

Critical Literacy Awareness

Reading Practices in Social Contexts: BROAD LEVEL Strategies

1 What reading practices are characteristic of particular social groups, e.g.
what kind of reading behaviour typifies a particular family or community group?

2 How is reading material produced in a particular society, i.e.
- how do advertisements, leaflets, and public information material come to us in the form they do?
- who produces them?
- how do they come to have the salience they do?

From Wallace, C. 1992, 'Critical Language Awareness in the EFL Classroom', in *Critical Language Awareness*, N. Fairclough, Longman.

Resource 5.9 **OHT**

Critical Literacy Awareness

Reading Practices in Social Contexts: TEXT LEVEL Strategy

1 What is the topic?

2 Why is the topic being written about?

3 How is the topic being written about?

4 What other ways are there to write about the topic?

5 Who is writing to whom?

From Wallace, C. 1992, (after Kress, 1989, *Linguistic processes in sociocultural practice*, Oxford University Press) 'Critical Language Awareness in the EFL Classroom', in *Critical Language Awareness*, N. Fairclough, Longman.

Resource 5.10

OHT & HANDOUT

Summary of Session 5

How might language be involved in making maths meaningful?

Maths gains *meaning*:

- through language and conceptual understanding
  - – in changing the emphasis from instrumental to relational understanding
  - – in closing the gap between spontaneous and formal concepts of how the world works
- through language and socially constructed representation
  - – in fostering an understanding of maths as socially, humanly constructed
- through language and critical numeracy
  - – in creating an awareness of how mathematics is used for social control
  - – in using maths to understand, act within and change the world we live in.

Resource 5.11 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 6.1
(page 1)

HANDOUT

Critical Literacy and Numeracy

What is critical literacy?

Read how these writers have tried to define 'critical literacy'.

'Critical Literacy sets out to encourage students to begin to see that literate practice is always morally and politically loaded—and that to work with a text doesn't necessarily involve buying into its world view or position.'

Critical ways of working with texts are 'ways that give students tools for weighing and critiquing, analysing and appraising textual techniques and ideologies, values and positions.'

Luke, A., O'Brien, J. & Comber, B. 1994, 'Making Community Texts Objects of Study', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 139-150.

In the face of any text 'I have three options open to me. I can *ignore* the field of discourse employed and let it pass, but at the cost of remaining ignorant, illiterate and impotent whenever it holds sway. I can *accept* and learn it in order to become sufficiently literate to enter into it. Or I can *challenge* the discourse, and thus engage in the exercise of critical literacy.'

Harris, K. 1993, 'Critical Literacy as political intervention', in C. Lankshear and P McLaren, *Critical Literacy: Politics, Praxis and the Post-Modern,*, New York: SUNY, p. 59.

'Like all other forms of literacy, critical literacy is political. It asks you to consider the politics of the authors you read and to decide whose side you are on when you write.

Critical literacy education pushes the definition of literacy beyond the traditional decoding or encoding of words in order to reproduce the meaning of text and society until it becomes a means for understanding one's own history an culture and their connection to current social structure, and for fostering an activism towards equal participation for all the decisions that affect and control our lives.'

Shannon, P. 1991, 'Questions and Answers', *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 44, No. 7, p. 518.

Resource 6.1
(page 2)

HANDOUT

Critical Literacy and Numeracy

What is critical literacy?

'If critical literacy is to mean anything of significance to us as educators in the nineties, it has to address those practices by which words enact social meaning, and the practices by which we, as social subjects, make meaning. It has to address how it is that social subjects are able to make the range of meanings that are able t0 make—the repertoires of reading they have access to—and it has to address how these repertoires can be broadened. If literacy in its most basic sense is about having access t practices involved in the making and remaking of textual meaning (about being able to read and write), then critical literacy must be about an exploration of those practices in terms of the social meanings such practices implicitly (and perhaps explicitly) authorise and silence.'

Pam Gilbert quoted in Lankshear, 1994, 'Critical Literacy', ***Occasional Paper No. 3*****, Belconnen: Australian Curriculum Studies Association, p. 12.**

'Linguists and teachers who adopt a critical view of language don't disregard language as pattern and language as purposeful process, but they consider that these views are inadequate without the critical dimension. Instead of a "normative" view of language use as conforming to conventions of appropriacy, they propose a "creative" view of language as constructing and sustaining identity.'

Ivanic, R. 1990, 'Critical Language Awareness in Action', in R. Carter (ed), ***Knowledge about language and the curriculum. The LINC Reader,*** **London: Hodder and Stoughton, p. 125.**

In what ways have the materials presented in this module increased your understanding of critical literacy and numeracy?

Resource 6.2 **HANDOUT**

Masculinity/Femininity and Representation

Resource 6.3 **HANDOUT**

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Resource 6.4
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HANDOUT

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Resource 6.4
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HANDOUT

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Session 5 Language and Mathematics

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Johnston, B. (ed.) 1992, *Reclaiming Mathematics*, DEET, Canberra.

Session 6 Language and Critical Literacy/Numeracy

Fairclough, N. (ed.) 1992, *Critical Language Awareness,* Longman, London.

Luke, A. O'Brien, J. & Comber, B. 1994, 'Making Community Texts Objects of Study', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 17(2).

Poynton, C. 1991, 'Reading the News: representation, agency, control' in F. Christie (ed.) *Language in the Social Processes.*

Wallace, C. 1992, 'Critical Literacy Awareness in the EFL Classroom' in N. Fairclough (ed.)*Critical Language Awareness.*, Longman, London.

Resource 6.5 **HANDOUT**

Evaluation of Module 5

1. What particular aspects did you find helpful?

2. What aspects were least useful/relevant to you?

3. What would you change or like to see presented differently?

4. What future inservice/extension/support would you like to see arising from these workshops?

5. Any other comments?

LANGUAGE *in* *ALBE* *Teaching and Learning*

Readings

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Please refer to the original articles if you want the full details of the authors' references.

Pre-Reading for Session 1

Hammond, J., Burns, A., Joyce, H., Brosnan, D. & Gerot, L. 1992, *English for Social Purposes*, National Centre for English Language Teaching & Research, Macquarie University, pp. 1–8.

Part One: Theoretical Principles

The materials in this book draw on:

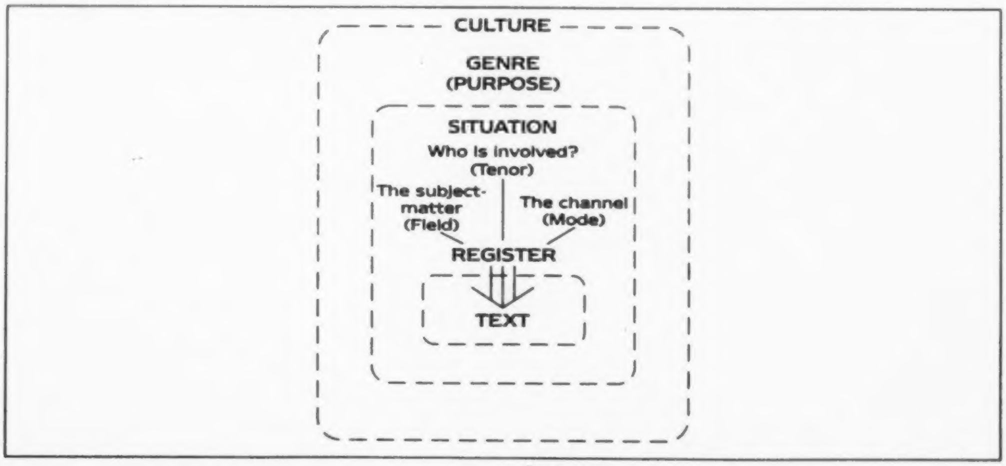
- systemic-functional linguistics, developed by Halliday and others (e.g. Halliday 1978, 1985 (a and b), Halliday and Hasan 1976) and
- the work in literacy that derives from systemic-functional linguistics, especially that of Martin and Rothery (1980, 1981) and Christie (1984, 1985).

Systemic-functional linguistics has a number of tenets that make it particularly useful as a basis for developing literacy programs:

- Language is functional, that is, language is the way it is because of the meaning it makes. The theory suggests that resources available within the systems of discourse, grammar and vocabulary are utilised in specific ways to make specific meanings.
- It is a theory of language in context, and suggests that language can only be understood in relation to the context in which it is used. Thus different purposes for using language and different contexts result in different language texts. The construction of language texts in turn impacts on the context. There is thus a two-way relationship between text and context.
- The theory focuses on language at the level of whole text. By text is meant any connected stretch of language that is doing a job within a social context. Thus the term 'text' is used to refer to stretches of spoken and written language. Text may be as short as one word, e.g. EXIT, or may be as long as a book such as a training manual. This theory differs from most other approaches to language study, notably traditional grammar, which offers systematic analyses of language only up to the level of sentence, and provides little guidance to the language learner, who needs to know about structure, organisation and development in connected oral discourse and written texts.

The following model (Derewianka, 1990) demonstrates this more clearly as follows:

FIGURE 1.1 The Model of Language



THE MODEL OF LANGUAGE

GENRE

In Figure 1.1, the outer layer represents the context of culture in which any language interaction takes place. The context of culture incorporates:

- the attitudes, values and shared experiences of any group of people living in the one culture
- culturally evolved expectations of ways of behaving
- culturally evolved ways of getting things done or of achieving common goals.

The culturally evolved ways of getting things done typically involve language in one way or another and are referred to as *genres* in the model above. Examples of genres include:

- buying and selling goods
- directing someone to the bank
- recounting recent events
- arguing a point of view.

Each genre is characterised by a distinctive schematic structure, that is, by a distinctive beginning, middle and end structure through which the social function of the genre is realised. While some purposes for speaking and writing remain constant across cultures, the ways in which these purposes are realised vary. Thus it is likely that there will be considerable variation of genres between cultures.

REGISTER

Language is used in a context of situation as well as a context of culture. Halliday (e.g. 1978) suggests that there are three variables within any context of situation that largely determine the language choices that are made in the construction of any language text. These variables function together and are responsible for the configuration of language features found in any text. This configuration of language features constitutes the ***Register***. The contextual variables are:

Field: the social activity taking place. For example, football, cooking, stamp collecting, studying Australian history, economics.

Tenor: the relationships between participants. Relationships can be described in terms of power (equal or unequal status), contact (how often you have contact with the person to whom you are speaking or writing), or affect (attitudes and feelings towards topics and participants). The relationships that exist between participants or the audience for whom a text is written, have a considerable impact on the language that is used.

Mode: the channel of linguistic communication. It involves two perspectives on distance:

(i) distance in space and distance in time between speaker/listener and reader/writer

(ii) distance between text and the events being referred to, such as listening to a cooking demonstration on TV; relating the TV demonstration to a friend; reading a recipe. These two notions of distance frequently relate to the transition from spoken to written language.

Field, tenor and mode determine the choices that the speaker or writer makes from the systems in the language of discourse, vocabulary and grammar. Some of the ways in which these choices operate are as follows:

Field: choice of vocabulary, selection of verbs of doing, being or feeling

Tenor: use of modality and modulation, choices of personal pronouns

Mode: cohesive ties operating in spoken or written texts.

HOW GENRE AND REGISTER WORK TOGETHER

Here is an illustration of the way genre and register work together in the text.

Text 1

> One of our colleagues, Harvey Preston-Cooper, was bitten by a 2m long Freshwater Crocodile that was being moved at a zoo. The crocodile refused to let go and eventually two screwdrivers were needed to open its jaws. As it was, the bite left two rows of punctures either side of her leg, but had not a co-worker held the crocodile and stopped it spinning, the injury could have been much worse. (Webb & Manolis 1989:113)

Text 2

> The main criteria used to distinguish members of the three subfamilies are associated with the head, in particular the skull and jaws. The skull and jaws of all crocodilians function identically and are composed of the same suite of bones, but there is variation in the extent to which different bones compose certain structures. Fortunately there are some external characteristics of the head that allow members of the three subfamilies to be distinguished. (Webb & Manolis 1989:17)

Text 1 is a short recount genre of a crocodile attack and **Text 2** is part of a report genre providing information on different types of crocodiles. The purposes of each text are clearly different. In **Text 1** the writers recount a dramatic incident while in **Text 2** the writers provide factual information on crocodilians. Consequently the writers have shaped and organised the texts differently and have made different choices regarding vocabulary and grammar in the construction of these two texts.

Text 1 – Structure

Orientation	the attack is located in time and place and the major participants (Harvey Preston-Cooper and the crocodile) introduced
Event	the crocodile bites and refuses to let go
Event	the screwdriver is used to prise open the crocodile's jaws
Coda	how the co-worker prevents injury from being worse.

Text 2 – Structure

General Statement	the topic of classification of crocodile families is introduced
Description	details of similarities and differences between sub-groups of crocodiles are given.

A closer analysis of the two texts reveals the links between the overall purpose and organisation of the texts and the language features. This is done by relating the contextual variables of field, tenor and mode to the choices that the writers have made at the level of vocabulary and grammar. Field is most obviously reflected in choice of vocabulary. Thus in the above texts choices in vocabulary include:

Text 1 ***Freshwater Crocodile, crocodile, jaws, bite, injury***

Text 2 ***subfamilies, head, skull, jaws, skull, crocodiles, bones***

Since both texts draw on the field of crocodiles there is some overlap in vocabulary choice such as *crocodile* and *jaws.*

Field is also realised through the patterns of 'goings on' in the texts. Thus, while in Text 1 we have mainly verbs of action (e.g. *bitten, let go, open, held, stopped, spinning)* and specific participants *(Harvey Preston-Cooper, her, a 2m long Freshwater Crocodile, the crocodile, a co-worker),* in Text 2 we have mainly verbs of being or having (e.g. *are associated, are composed, is, compose, are)* and generic participants (e.g. *members of the three subfamilies, skull and jaws of all crocodilians, members of the three subfamilies).*

Tenor is somewhat neutral in both texts, as is typical in written mode. There are, however, differences between Texts 1 and 2, as can be seen in the following features:

> Text 1 uses personal pronouns *(her, it)* and some indication of the writer's attitude is given through the choice of words such as *refused, much worse.*
>
> Text 2 maintains strictly neutral tenor through frequent use of passives (e.g. *are associated, are composed, to be distinguished).*

Each text is in the written mode, however there are differences between the texts in regard to distance from action. For example, Text 1 recounts a recent crocodile action, whereas Text 2 provides abstracted information about crocodiles. A more detailed discussion of mode is included in the section on relationship between spoken and written language.

The knowledge of social context and the relationship of language to this context enables:

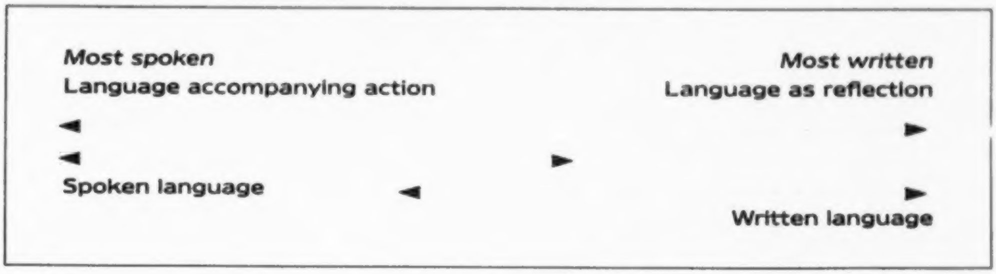
- teachers to analyse texts and make explicit to learners why language choices are made
- learners to understand the intricate relationship of language to context and move towards independence as writers.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The model of language outlined above provides the basis for looking more closely at the nature of spoken and written modes of language. An understanding of the relationship between these modes is central to developing a view of what the term 'literacy' means within the context of an industrialised society. The view of literacy held by teachers has, in turn, direct implications for the nature of literacy programs that are taught in classrooms.

The relationship between spoken and written language can usefully be viewed as a continuum, from 'most spoken' on the one hand to 'most written' on the other. This view can be represented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 1.2.

FIGURE 1.2 Spoken and Written Continuum



The term 'most spoken' refers to language interactions where language most closely accompanies action, and where there is the least physical distance between participants. Examples of 'most spoken' texts include the language that accompanies tennis matches, basketball games, shared games, construction of buildings, etc. The term 'most written' refers to language texts where distance from action is greatest and where distance between participants is maximal. Examples of 'most written' texts include abstract reflections on causes and effects of distant events, such as history or economics, theoretical arguments and where an author writes for an unknown future audience.

There is no clear dividing line between spoken and written language. Some texts are neither exclusively spoken nor written. Examples of such texts include political speeches that have been written in order to be spoken, or plays that have been written in order to be spoken as if spontaneous speech. Some spoken texts have features typically associated with written language, such as a clearly articulated spoken argument in defence of a point of view. Some written texts contain features commonly associated with spoken language, e.g. a chatty letter to a close friend.

The advantages of conceptualising the relationship between spoken and written language as that of a continuum is that it highlights important similarities as well as differences between the modes. The major similarity is the fact that both speakers and writers draw on the same language systems of discourse, vocabulary and grammar. A comparison of texts from the spoken and written ends of the mode continuum, however, clearly highlights important differences. A recognition of both similarities and differences is important for a clear articulation of the term 'literacy'.

On the spoken end of the continuum are texts with features that are typical of spoken language. Such texts are dialogic in nature, in that they are jointly constructed by two or more participants. Even when one participant simply nods and says 'Mm', the physical presence and the feedback from this participant contribute to the construction of the text. Spontaneous spoken texts are not preplanned and edited in the way that written texts are planned and edited, although some editing through self-correction frequently occurs in spoken language. Spoken texts are usually very much dependent on and related to the context in which they are produced. For example, in utterances such as *'put it here please'* interpretation of the term 'it' and 'here' are dependent on speaker and listener sharing the same physical context. In this sense such texts can be said to be cohesive with the context.

On the written end of the continuum, texts have very different features. They are essentially monologic, in that they are constructed by one person writing alone, although the writer may discuss the construction of his or her text with a reader. Typically, written texts are preplanned, drafted and edited before reaching their final version. The writer cannot assume a shared context or shared knowledge with the reader who may be separated from the writer by both time and geographical distance. Thus, written texts must be decontextualised in the sense that they must be independent of the actual physical context in which they were created. The cohesive ties must link into the text rather than out into the context. Unlike spoken texts, a written text must be cohesive within itself.

The general differences described above are reflected in different patterns of language choice in spoken and written texts. These patterns can be demonstrated through a comparison of texts as shown below.

Text A

X: Can I come and show you?

Y: Yes, OK.

X: I've finished this bit. Do you think that should go here?

Y: Yeah, that's fine.

Text B

Colleagues worked on the task. Sue wrote the introduction. Jenny wrote the body of the article and then they edited it. They made sure that the two parts were consistent in style.

Text C

The completion of the document was achieved through the collaborative participation of colleagues. The editing process necessitated ensuring consistency of style between the various segments of the document.

The language patterns of Texts A, B and C are described under the headings of Reference, Lexical Density and Nominalisation.

REFERENCE

Text A is an example of a spoken text where the participants are face-to-face and the language is accompanying the action. The speakers are able to make their meaning clear

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simply by referring to their immediate physical surroundings. If we remove the text from these physical surroundings, we cannot be sure who or what is being referred to. Such texts are sometimes described as being 'context embedded' (Cummins and Swain, 1986).

It is not immediately apparent whether Text B is spoken or written. It is apparent, however, that it is no longer language accompanying an action – but is instead reflecting on a previous action. The people and things referred to in the text are no longer present in the immediate physical setting of the writer/speaker. When people and things are introduced into such a text they need to be labelled fully *(Colleagues, the task)*. Follow-up reference to those people and things can be made by using pronouns *(they, it)*. Use of such reference items serves to link parts of the text together into a cohesive whole.

Text C, which is more clearly a written text, contains no pronominal reference. Instead chains of related vocabulary items serve to tie the text together into a cohesive passage *(document, editing process, consistency of style, segments)*.

LEXICAL DENSITY

In making the meaning of a text clear for readers who do not share the physical context, the writer necessarily increases the amount of information in a text. This can be seen in Texts A, B and C by the different proportions of lexical items, or content words, in the texts. The lexical items in Texts A, B and C have been underlined, and they are distinct from the grammatical or structural words. A useful way of systematically comparing the amount of information in each text is through a calculation of lexical density (Halliday: 1985b). This is calculated by dividing the total number of lexical items by the number of clauses in the text, thereby giving a ratio of the average number of lexical items per clause in the text. Following this procedure lexical density in Texts A, B and C is as follows: Text A: 1.2; Text B: 2.7; Text C: 7.5. As the figures indicate, as texts become 'more written', lexical density increases. That is, more content information is packed into each clause.

If we look more closely at Texts A, B and C, we get some indication of how this happens. The clauses in written texts become longer because more information is packed into the noun/nominal group. A comparison of the nominal groups in the texts is shown in Figure 1.3 below:

FIGURE 1.3 A Comparison of Nominal Groups in Texts A, B and C

Text A	I; you; I; this bit; you; that.
Text B	Colleagues; the task; Sue; the introduction; Jenny; the body of the article; they; the two parts.
Text C	The completion of the document; the collaborative participation of colleagues; the editing process; consistency of style; the various segments of the document.

Through the addition of modifying adjectives and qualifying phrases to nominal groups, the writer of Text C has managed to pack information into a small number of clauses. This feature is typical of other written texts.

NOMINALISATION

Another feature appears in the nominal groups of Text C, which is also typical of other written texts. The nominal groups – *the completion of the document; the collaborative participation of colleagues, the editing process* – all represent action as things. That is, actions, which would usually be coded as verbs in spoken texts, have been coded as nouns, or things, in the written texts. The process of changing actions into things in written texts is often referred to as nominalisation (Halliday 1985b). Once actions have been turned into things in written texts, they can do what other nouns can do, that is, they can act on other things or they can themselves be acted upon. As the text becomes increasingly nominalised, there are fewer people doing the actions. Thus in Text C, the subjects in the clauses are: *the completion of the document; the editing process.* Compare this with Text A where the subjects in the clauses are: *I; I;* and *you.*

The different natures of spoken and written language, as shown in the language patterns described above, have evolved because of the different functions that spoken and written texts fulfil in society. These different functions are particularly significant in the educational context and are reflected in the units of work outlined later in this book.

Pre-Reading for Session 2

Fishman, P. 1983, 'Interaction: The Work Women Do', in B. Thorne, C. Kramerae & N. Henley (eds) *Language, Gender and Society*, Newbury House, Rowley, MA, pp. 98–101.

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INTERACTION: THE WORK WOMEN DO

Pamela M. Fishman

In this article Pamela Fishman gives an account of a research project first reported in 1977 in which she studied fifty-two hours of tape-recorded conversations between three heterosexual couples in their homes over periods from four to fourteen days.

She applied textual analysis to the transcripts, testing her hypotheses and assumptions and comparing her results to those of many other researchers.

The complete article is found on pages 89–101 of *Language, Gender and Society*. Participants who wish to examine Fishman's research and to explore her ideas further should read the full article.

This Pre-Reading reproduces only the concluding paragraphs.

INTERACTION: THE WORK WOMEN DO

CONCLUSIONS

There is an unequal distribution of work in conversation. We can see from the differential use of strategies that the women are more actively engaged in insuring interaction than the men. They ask more questions and use more attention beginnings. Women do support work while the men are talking and it is the women who generally do active maintenance and continuation work in conversations. The men, on the other hand, do much less active work when they begin or participate in interactions. They rely on statements, which they assume will get responses. They much more often discourage interactions initiated by women than vice versa.

These data suggest several general patterns of female-male interactional work. Compared with the men, the women tried more often and succeeded less often in getting conversations going, whereas the men tried les often and seldom failed in their attempts. Both men and women regarded topics introduced by women as tentative; many of these were quickly dropped. In contrast, topics introduced by the men were treated as topics to be pursued; they were seldom rejected. The women worked harder than the men in conversation because they had less certainty of success with the topics they raised. The women did much of the necessary work of interaction, starting conversations and then working to maintain them.

The failure of the women's attempts at interaction is not due to anything inherent in their talk, but to the failure of the men to respond, to do interactional work. The successes of the men's attempts is due to the women doing interactional work in response to remarks by the men. Thus, the definition of what is appropriate or inappropriate in conversation becomes the man's choice. What part of the world the interactants orient to, construct, and maintain the reality of, is his choice, not hers. Yet the women labor hardest in making interactions go.

INTERACTION: THE WORK WOMEN DO

As with work in its usual sense, there appears to be a division of labor in conversation. The people who do the routine maintenance work, the women, are not the same people who either control or benefit from the process. Women are the "shitworkers" of routine interaction, and the "goods" being made are not only interactions, but, through them, realities.

This analysis of the detailed activity in everyday conversation suggests other dimensions of power and work. Two interrelated aspects concern women's availability and the maintenance of gender. While women have difficulty generating interactions, they are almost always available to do the conversational work required by men and which is necessary for interactions. Appearances may differ by case: sometimes women are required to sit and be a "good listener" because they are not otherwise needed. At other times women are required to fill silences and keep conversation moving, to talk a lot. Sometimes they are expected to develop others' topics, and at other times they are requires to present and develop topics of their own.

Women are required to do their own work in a very strong sense. Sometimes they are required in ways that can be seen in interaction, as when men use interactional strategies such as attention beginnings and questions, to which the women fully respond. There are also times when there is no direct situational evidence of "requirement" from the man, and the woman does so "naturally". "Naturally" means that it is morally requires to do so and a highly sanctionable matter not to. If one does not act "naturally", then one can be seen as crazy and deprived of adult status. We can speculate on the quality of doing it "naturally" by considering what happens to women who are unwilling to be available for the various jobs that the situation requires. Women who successfully control interactions are often derided and doubt is cast on their femininity. They are often considered "abnormal"—"terms like "castrating bitch", "domineering", "aggressive", and "witch" may be used to identify them. When they attempt to control conversations temporarily, women often "start" arguments.

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INTERACTION: THE WORK WOMEN DO

Etiquette books are filled with instructions to women on how to be available. Women who do not behave are punished by deprivation of full female status. One's identity as either male or female is the most crucial identity one has. It is the most "natural" differentiating characteristic there is.

Whereas sociologists generally treat sex as an "ascribed" rather than as an "achieved" characteristic, Garfinkel's (1967, ch. 5) study of a transsexual describes one's gender as a continual, routine accomplishment. He discusses what the transsexual Agnes has shown him, that one must continually give off the appearance of being female or male in order for your gender to be unproblematic in a given interaction. Agnes had to learn these appearances and her awareness of them was explicit. For "normally sexed" people, it is routine.

To be identified as female, women are required to look and act in particular ways. Talking is part of this complex of behaviour. Women must talk like a female talks; they must be available to do what needs to be done in conversation, to do the shitwork and not complain. But all the activities involved in displaying femaleness are usually defined as part of being what a woman *is*, so the idea that it is work is obscured. The work is not seen as what women do, but as part of what they are. Because this work is obscured, because it is too often seen as an aspect of gender identity rather than of gender activity, the maintenance and expression of male-female power relations in our everyday conversations are hidden as well. When we orient instead to the activities involved in maintaining gender, we are able to discern the reality of hierarchy in our daily lives.

The purpose of this study has been to begin an exploration of the details of concrete conversational activity of couples in their homes from the perspective of the socially structured power relationship between males and females. From such detailed analysis we see that women do the work necessary for interaction to occur smoothly. But men control what will be produced as reality by the interaction. They already have, and they continually establish and enforce their rights to define what the interaction, and reality, will be about.

Pre-Reading for Session 3

Prince, D. 1992, *Literacy in the Workplace: A self-study guide for teachers*, AMES NSW, pp. 83–6. Reprinted by permission.

CASE A

Learning language for greater participation

The industrial context

The company, a large organisation involved in the metals industry, had already been involved for several years in dramatic restructuring in an effort to compete more successfully in the international marketplace. Following significant retrenchments and industrial unrest in the early 1980s, the company and unions entered into an industry agreement and were in the process of restructuring jobs and awards, in accordance with the terms of that agreement. A skills audit was underway throughout the organisation and considerable emphasis was placed on the part training and development would play in equipping employees with the skills they needed in the restructured workplace. The company had demonstrated a commitment to workplace training including English language courses over a long period of time, and had a special section within the training and development department which was responsible for the development of employees' language and literacy skills.

Although still characterised by bureaucracy, the organisation had decentralised to some extent and was now operating according to Total Quality Management principles, with separate departments functioning as independent business units. Consultative processes were being established within each business unit although progress varied due to a number of factors including strategic choice and attitudes within each unit (see Figure 3).

The request

One particular department requested a language and literacy course for a group of employees from non-English speaking backgrounds, who were in representative roles in their department, e.g. consultative committee members.

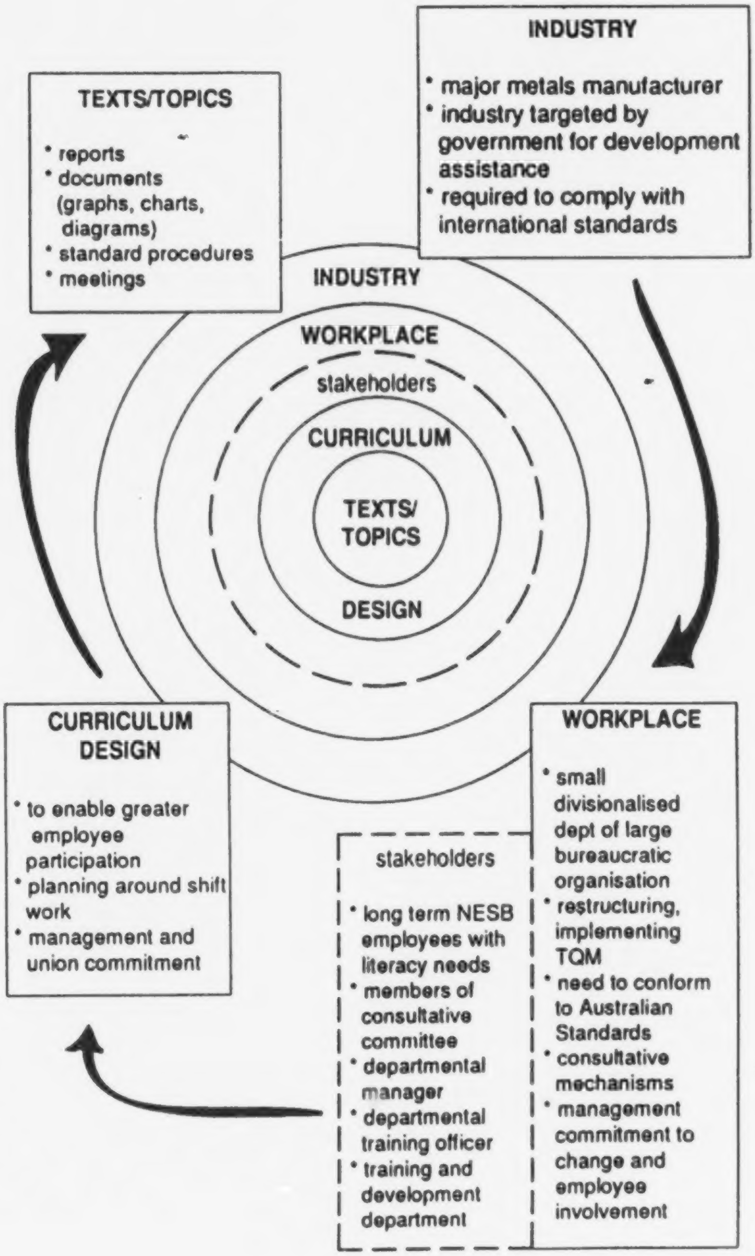
TEXTS/TOPICS
• reports
• documents (graphs, charts, diagrams)
• standard procedures
• meetings
INDUSTRY
• major metals manufacturer
• industry targeted by government for development assistance
• required to comply with international standards
INDUSTRY
WORKPLACE
stakeholders
CURRICULUM
TEXTS/ TOPICS
DESIGN
CURRICULUM DESIGN
• to enable greater employee participation
• planning around shift work
• management and union commitment
WORKPLACE
• small divisionalised dept of large bureaucratic organisation
• restructuring, implementing TQM
• need to conform to Australian Standards
• consultative mechanisms
• management commitment to change and employee involvement
stakeholders
• long term NESB employees with literacy needs
• members of consultative committee
• departmental manager
• departmental training officer
• training and development department

Figure 3. Case A

Organisational data

At an initial meeting with the departmental manager, the human resource officer and training department representative, the following questions were asked.

What is the consultative committee?
What is the purpose of this committee?
What sort of issues does it deal with?
How often does it meet?
How is information from meetings communicated to others in the workplace?
How long has the consultative committee been formed?
What other training have consultative committee representatives had?
Why has the course been requested at this time?
Have particular problems been identified?
Who initiated the request for a course?
What is the function of the department?
How is it structured?
What jobs do the potential participants do?

Although reasons for establishing a pilot language and literacy course in this department were not explicitly stated, it was explained that the idea had been 'on the works agenda' for some time and was supported by the union. The department employed 225 people of whom 36 were Staff, i.e. salaried supervisory and administrative personnel, and 191 were Wages personnel, i.e. oxygear operators, tally people, crane drivers. Of the 150 employees from non-English speaking backgrounds, 97 were of various Yugoslav origins. Overall, literacy levels in the department were perceived to be poor and were thought to limit the employees' ability to undertake further training opportunities.

There were 8 or 9 possible participants for this course and only one was a woman. A total of 5 women were employed in this department. All the course nominees were long-term employees, perceived to be amongst the 'better' communicators in the department. They had all been involved at different times as intermediaries translating information between management and employees.

There were several possible reasons why such a request might have been made at this time and it can be interpreted through each of the four perspectives on organisational processes which were presented in Unit 3 of Section One (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Given that the company was undergoing major restructuring, training included language and literacy development, could have been seen from the structural frame as a means of ensuring people had the skills to suit the new tasks and environment. In their roles as consultative committee members, employees needed to be able to communicate effectively. The request could also have ben interpreted as a symbolic gesture, meant to enhance the role of committee members in the new social order. Another motivation could have been political. These representatives would play an integral role in 'selling' the idea of language and literacy development to their workmates.

From observing the notice boards in the department it seemed that employees were being encouraged to take part in workplace decision-making processes. A folio of sample texts which employees were expected to be able to read was provided for the teacher. In addition she was given a copy of a report on initial interviews and assessments of participants undertaken by another teacher. The report suggested a course covering the development of the following language skills in the context of meetings:

- listening
- expressing opinions
- asking questions
- taking notes
- relaying messages

Curriculum design

Organisation of delivery

Since the department was already involved in a range of training programs, there were no apparent problems in organising the release of employees from their jobs to attend this course. Each session was held in the usual meeting/training room and afternoon tea was made available as for other courses. A locked filing cabinet was provided for storage of dictionaries and other teaching aids. At the first meeting focusing on organisational details, it seemed that delivery would be structured into fortnightly 'blocks' with each block being repeated for two separate groups. However, on further discussion, all participants expressed interest in attending each afternoon and it was not thought necessary to offer repeat sessions. So, weekly sessions of four hours were scheduled for shift change-over times. Those rostered on afternoon shift reported for class two hours before the start of their shift. At the end of the class started work two hours into the shift. When they were rostered off they could choose to come in for class but were not paid for this time. Nor were they paid to attend when rostered on night shift.

Pre-Readings for Session 4

There are two Pre-Readings for Session 4.

Eades, D. 1993, 'Aboriginal English', *Pen '93* (pamphlet), Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney.

One copy of this pamphlet is found inside the back cover of the ring-binder folder for this program. It has to be photocopied and sent to participants along with the other Pre-Readings.

Harris, S. 1977, 'Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication', *Developing Education*, vol. 4, no. 5, pp. 23–29, Northern Territory Department of Education.

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See pages 161 to 169.

Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communication

STEPHEN G. HARRIS

Most of us overestimate the role of words in communication between people. Other factors sometimes called paralinguistic features strongly influence what kind of message passes between people during conversations. These are features such as tone of voice, loudness, facial expression, body posture, and all the experiences the speaker and listener have previously shared; for example, all of us know that terms of abuse can be both expressions of extreme anger and of close affection. However, when members of two cultures are trying to communicate, there are all of these same factors present, except that the 'same' factor may mean something different in the second culture. Also, some entirely new expectations about communication that express different cultural values and a different range of attitudes about personal rights, may all be expressed through speech and the behaviours which supplement speech. The following paper is a summary of a talk given to the Milingimbi school staff earlier this year (1977) at an orientation lecture. The format of question and answer was designed to help a teacher in an Aboriginal school imagine himself/herself in a situation of potential misunderstanding. If a Balanda* reader's contact with Yolngu* is almost all within the Balanda domain (which at Milingimbi is mainly the world of the Balanda's work and operates mainly from 8.00 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday) and with the most Westernized Yolngu, then much of what follows will appear biased observation. But if he is trying to relate to Yolngu in both their world and his own, then the observations are valid and meaningful. Every kind of experience mentioned or implied below happened frequently to the author. That these experiences still happen may reflect the fact that historically, Aboriginal values and behaviour patterns at Milingimbi will die hard. Those behaviours associated with verbal communication described in this paper are part of the cultural background with which Yolngu children enter school at Milingimbi, and which continue being very real for all their school experience here. Therefore, a Balanda school teacher can hardly ignore the reality of the children's expectations about verbal behaviour as they seek to relate to the children and possibly help them to become bicultural people.

*Note
Balanda and *Yolngu* are the terms the people of north east Arnhem Land use to refer to white people and themselves respectively. (*Yolngu* means 'person', *Balanda* is thought to be a corruption of 'Hollander'.)

1. If a Yolngu agrees on Friday that he will go fishing with you on Saturday morning and does not turn up, is he being rude to you?

From a Yolngu attitude to verbal commitments, No. If it were always the Balanda-initiated verbal agreements that the Yolngu did not adhere to, the explanation would probably be that Yolngu dislike verbal confrontations and as a consequence frequently say 'what the Balanda wants to hear'. But many of the instances of failure to meet verbal commitments involve Yolngu-initiated commitments. A deeper analysis reveals that from a Yolngu point of vies, there need be no direct connection between what he does and what he promises to do. Also, from his point of view, it seems very strange behaviour to carry out a commitment to a pleasure, if what looked like a pleasure yesterday has turned into a chore today. He is much more pragmatic in his reaction to present circumstances and in this context less governed by what the Balanda call 'principles of keeping to your word'. What his behaviour really means is that 'extenuating circumstances' become valid at a different level for him than for the Balanda. For example, if a Balanda broke his ankle, this would be considered as valid 'extenuating circumstances'. In contrast, if your potential Yolngu friend agreed on Friday night to go fishing on Saturday, but on Saturday morning feels very tired, that tiredness probably qualifies in his value system as 'extenuating circumstances'. A Balanda will often, without thinking, interpret this difference between the two value systems as rudeness on the part of the Yolngu.

Also, Aborigines tend to live in two fairly clearly separated domains of behaviour (which are supported by domains of language, domains of values, domains of different orientation to time, etc.). One of these domains is the Balanda world of technological work, cash economy. attendance at school, and clocks, etc; and the other is the Yolngu world of relatives, close social atmosphere, independent choice of action and a more casual attitude to time, etc. One of the effects on the Yolngu of living in these two domains of behaviour is that a commitment made in one domain fades (sometimes into insignificance) when viewed from the other domain. The Yolngu domain is still by far the stronger in terms of values and definitions of social responsibilities, and so often wins over commitments made in the Balanda domain. If you 'followed up' your Yolngu friend in the camp and said, 'What about our arrangement?' you would probably get some cooperation, but that involves a new pressure and not what is being discussed here. And of course, if the verbal commitment involves something that is personally important to the Yolngu, one that still seems important on Saturday morning that is, he will meet it. But it remains true that one of the hardest features of Yolngu behaviour for the new Balanda to get used to is their frequent failure to link verbal commitments to actual behaviour at all kinds of levels — from fishing trips to important political decisions made in the community by the Yolngu themselves. It is because of behaviour like this that the Yolngu gain the reputation among Balanda of being very subjective people and of 'living in the present'.

2. Is it inexcusable that having agreed to go fishing on Saturday morning, and having decided to change his mind and not go, he fails to come and let you know?

From the Yolngu point of view, No. To begin with, he has done nothing as definite as 'change his mind'. Yesterday when he made his commitment, his intention to actually go fishing was probably serious. However, he wasn't saying 'I hereby agree to take you fishing tomorrow, come hell or high water'. He was saying, 'At the moment, I feel that I'd really like to take you fishing in the morning'. Yolngu tend to be opportunists and to act on impulse in the sense that they tend to be ready to react to opportunities as they present themselves, rather than to carefully plan for them. Even when a Yolngu ceremony involves much planning, no one can be sure what day or week it will actually begin. (This may be an adaptation to the small degree of control they had over the physical universe in their 'hunting and gathering' heritage.) In other words, a more Yolngu way to arrange a fishing trip on Saturday morning would be to go down to the beach when you were ready and if there were someone there with whom you would like to go fishing, then suggest it and go. Finally, it is worth remembering that the system can work both ways: if you have committed yourself to a fishing trip with a Yolngu but do not meet the commitment, you probably have not spoiled his day and he will not think any less of you.

3. If you give a Yolngu a lift in your boat, say from the mainland to Milingimbi Island, and when you land on Milingimbi Beach he gets out and walks away —with of without a friendly smile or nod — and offers no 'thanks' and no help to put the boat away, is he being rude?

No. From his point of view, people normally do things either because they want to, or else because they have some obligation to fulfil to specific relations. He automatically thinks that you gave him the lift because you wanted to, so there is no need for an expression of thanks. (The fact that there is no vernacular tradition of saying 'thanks' immediately after the event is consistent with this view.) If the man to whom you gave the lift is friendly the next time you meet him, it might be more because he now knows you a little through shared experience, than because he's 'being grateful' for what you did for him. Yolngu seldom expect 'public spiritedness' from others and normally respect your right to do what you want to do, which apparently included giving him a lift. If the Yolngu involved is a young person, he will probably say 'thank you' because he has learned it from Balanda contact; but you still may not get any help in putting the outboard motor away, unless you ask for it. In other words, if the expression of 'thanks' after receiving assistance is looked at as a sociolinguistic rule of Balanda society, then the young Yolngu has learned the linguistic aspect of the behaviour, but not the social attitude with which Balanda associate it. Again from his point of

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view, there is no need to feel any obligation to you because the main reason you do anything is because you want to, and he will not sympathize with you or even understand any motives you may have of 'wanting to help the Aborigines'. This is not to say we Balanda teachers should not encourage people to help others for the sake of helping them. It is only to say that we should interpret this sort of Yolngu behaviour towards us when it happens, from their point of view.

4. Is it reasonable to expect Yolngu children to respond to all the questions they are asked in the classroom?

No. Because, (a) in Yolngu society, it is bad manners to be too curious or inquisitive, and Yolngu passively resist answering too many questions because it goes against their notions of independence and privacy. (b) Yolngu children have never experienced in their own culture the use of questioning as a teaching technique or the question-and-answer technique of transferring knowledge. It follows that the Yolngu cannot understand why a teacher is asking questions when he knows the answers. (There is one setting in Yolngu society where they ask questions when they know the answers. This is when they are angry and make a loud speech in public. Here one of the techniques of verbal challenge is to 'ask' rhetorical questions such as, 'Do you think I don't know what you've been doing, eh?' These questions are never answered, and children expect not to have to answer similar questions from teachers.) This simple inability to understand the function of the question is enough to reduce Yolngu children to a confused silence.

(c) Hypothetical questions are an even worse problem because they are never found in Yolngu speech. Even if Yolngu are asked a hypothetical question in a very real setting and it has immediate relevance, and they seriously try to understand it, they still often misunderstand because they will transpose the hypothetical setting to a literal setting. For example, if you say 'Would you rather have a banana or an orange?', and they say 'orange' they assume that you have both an orange and a banana right there to give them. Or, if you said, 'If X tried to marry Y, what would her relatives do about it?' (presumably you're trying to work out the marriage system), the listener will assume that you think that X really wants to marry Y, and will reply 'But she doesn't'. It is not inconsistent with this example, that what may appear as hypothetical questions about the *ideal* kinship system pose no difficulty for the Yolngu because here they are dealing with a formalized reality rather than with the hypothetical behaviour of individuals.

(d) In the area of command-questions or request-questions, Yolngu children behave very differently from Balanda children. In the Yolngu camp no one ever acts on the first request (e.g. '(will you) go and get some firewood?' or '(will you) get some water?'). The reaction of listeners suggests that they think the requester is tentatively testing a vague idea out loud, and no one thinks the requester is serious until the third or fourth mentioning and then the listeners comply if the circumstances are appropriate. From experience, the listeners know that suggestions and requests are often made and then dropped. An experienced Balanda teacher said, 'One of the most difficult communication problems in the classroom is the number of times I have to ask for something to be done before the action takes place. Although if I ask them to go and play the drums they're off before the sentence is finished. I'm sure they understand such requests or questions the first time, but are preconditioned to rarely being forced to do anything (and never forced to do it on the first request) to keep wondering if you're going to insist. The indication that you will insist is that you ask 3 or 4 times.

(e) Finally, shyness in the company of Balanda is probably more a barrier to answering questions for small Yolngu children than it is for Balanda children. It is a real part of Balanda culture to teach children to answer when spoken to; Yolngu children are allowed to behave as they wish.

5. If Yolngu children resist answering teachers' questions, is it not inconsistent that Yolngu children often ask questions in the most frustrating way in class?

No. The Balanda teacher often uses the question-answer approach to transfer and clarify knowledge. This is not a typical Yolngu way of doing things. A number of Balanda teachers at Milingimbi have noticed how rare it is for Yolngu students to ask questions that reveal curiosity or a hunger for knowledge or a drive to 'know'. An oversimplified explanation is that it is possible that Yolngu, as a religious society, have a religious or phenomenological rationale which allows them to accept much of what they see as 'natural phenomena'.

For example, a magic trick, dramatic chemical experiment or the workings of a motor car are accepted with less wonder by Yolngu than by Balanda. In contrast, Balanda society, which is largely secular, seeks to have scientific or 'logical' explanations for what they see: hence the different use of a questioning approach to knowledge. On the other hand, Yolngu students often ask many questions of teachers, but these questions are of a special nature; they are procedural questions.: 'Will I use the English book?' 'Are we going to the library?' 'Is this right?' (One Balanda teacher at Milingimbi, who had a very good relationship with the students but who sometimes became frustrated with the children asking 'Will I use my English book?' ad nauseam, replied 'No, use your Russian book', and the student happily went ahead with the English book.) This type of question might indicate an insecurity in the classroom situation or a lack of real understanding of what school education is all about. Although teachers should be glad when Yolngu children in their classes are sufficiently confident of their relationship with their teachers to allow them to ask questions incessantly, they do find the situation frustrating because most of the questions have nothing to do with learning. The children are not being inconsistent by often asking, but seldom answering questions, because their questions and the teacher's questions are of very different types.

6. Is talking clearly, forthrightly and strongly likely to be more offensive to Yolngu than Balanda?

Yes. This is probably more true for Yolngu adults than for the children, although it is often true for children too. 'Strong talk' in the case of children does not include the common semi-affectionate bellowing of mothers and grandmothers. Several times a Balanda teacher was observed to 'speak strongly' to a Yolngu child who was very clearly in the wrong. However, by speaking in such a manner, the teacher lost the initiative because in the student's eyes his crime had been overshadowed by a greater one committed by the teacher, and the student said with all guilt gone, 'But you spoke roughly to me'. 'Strong talk' in Yolngu culture is associated with personal animosity or anger especially where there is a difference of opinion. A statement such as 'There's nothing personal in what I'm going to say, but...' is meaningless to Yolngu. They have no objective, impersonal debate from of interpersonal conversation. Often, in my own home, several Yolngu children, teenagers or adults have sat with horror and amazement written all over their faces while observing quite hard or 'heated' debate between groups of Balanda, at any moment expecting them to come to blows, and somewhat confused when someone laughs or offers coffee all around.

It is not suggested that Balanda teachers should never 'speak strongly' to a class. In many cases there may be nothing else the teacher can find to do. The main point is that 'strong speaking' has such a different function and nature in Yolngu language that it is very difficult for Balanda teachers to use strong speaking in an effective but inoffensive way with the Yolngu children in their class.

7. If a Yolngu asks you to do a favour, something that seems unreasonable or impractical, is he being disrespectful to you in some way? (for example, asking you to lend your outboard motor, or to take him in your truck to get a load of firewood just before dark as you sit down to tea.)

No. (a) Yolngu still do not know many of the subtleties of what is considered reasonable and what is considered unreasonable in Balanda culture, and one of the few ways open to them to find out is to build up enough courage to ask. Not only are Balanda cultural expectations difficult to fully understand as such, but a wide variety of Balanda is found in Aboriginal communities ranging from the liberal share-my-stuff type to the colonialistic deep-your-distance type. Asking a favour is a very pragmatic and sure way of finding out what sort of person the new Balanda is and how much he will be willing to do for various Yolngu.

(b) Another reason the Balanda might misinterpret the above Yolngu action is that normally the Balanda will think very carefully about how the listener is likely to respond *before* he asks a favour. Here the responsibility for judging the reasonableness of the request is largely taken by the asker. Balanda culture makes the refusal to grant a request embarrassing and unpleasant, and the onus of avoiding a refusal-situation is placed on the asker. The asker is required by Balanda culture to ask only for things he genuinely feels are reasonable and likely to be granted. This restriction is not found in Yolngu culture. If a Yolngu is asking the favour, he will normally leave the responsibility for judging its reasonableness up to the listener. In Yolngu culture, this is not a harsh thing to do, because the Yolngu is prepared to accept a very 'lame' excuse for why the answer must be 'No'. That is, very lame in a Balanda's opinion, such as saying, 'I haven't got any petrol', and then driving off. Balanda are often embarrassed at saying 'no' because they feel awkward at offering a really lame excuse. However, the Yolngu asker will normally accept the euphemistic 'no' (i.e. the excuse) without any personal feeling of rebuff. (This is one aspect of Yolngu sociolinguistic behaviour that is similar to a practice that is common in at least parts of Papua New Guinea, where, on being refused an 'unreasonable' request, the asker will say 'Mi traim tasol' and go off with a broad grin — all of which means, 'I'm only trying, that's all; don't take it too seriously; no hard feelings'.). Incidentally, it would be wrong to get the impression that Yolngu are always asking for favours in an insensitive way regardless of your feelings in return. If you really don't want to get involved in the give and take, they will soon find that out and leave you right alone.

8. If a Yolngu asks you to take them to some crabbing spot four or five kilometres away in your truck, and you say 'OK, but you'll have to wait for half an hour until I have finished this job', are they likely to believe you mean exactly what you say?

Unless they are quite well versed in Balanda ways, No. Because Yolngu seek to avoid direct verbal confrontation much more than Balanda do, they have a system of making excuses instead of saying a direct 'No'. This system enables a refusal to be hurtful to neither the asker nor the refuser and allows all parties to keep their right to independent action. The problem is, however, that in the situation described here, the Yolngu family will often think you are really saying, 'No' and they will disappear. And, being opportunists, they will probably be off asking someone else. This might cause you (the Balanda) to be annoyed because, half an hour later when you start your truck to take them to the crabbing spot, you find that you have to wait because several of the children are away asking someone else to take them. But remember that they were probably not at all upset at what they thought was your 'No', and will be most surprised that for some reason you seem to have changed your mind!

9. If you are telling a story and the audience is 'restless', i.e. members of the audience are quietly talking to one another, sometimes laughing quietly at each other's private jokes, or gazing at the ground in apparent boredom, does that mean they are not listening?

No, although (as with some of the other points above) a continuum is involved. Yolngu can sit in very still attention if the subject is emotionally and immediately absorbing to them, although even then the major speaker will not be the sole person talking, as members of the audience reserve the right to talk quietly among themselves.

And of course, at the other extreme, if the audience is in an uproar or talking so loudly that the speaker cannot be heard, then of course they are not listening. But generally speaking, a Yolngu audience contains more people talking and more people moving about, than would a Balanda audience. At Milingimbi this year, a new Balanda teacher was surprised to discover from talking to the students later, that restlessness in the audience while he was telling a story did not necessarily mean that they were not listening. On another occasion a very sophisticated, confident Yolngu lady was giving a lesson on Gupapuyngu pronunciation to new Balanda school staff. Their rapt attention, motionless behaviour and concentrated staring (in other words, a perfect Balanda audience) so unnerved her that she refused to teach subsequent lessons. Only tolerance and experience can help the Balanda teacher know when a class's restlessness during a teacher's talk or while he is reading out loud, is productive cultural behaviour or when it is unproductive play at the expense of learning.

10. If you pass a Yolngu on the road and say, 'Hullo' and there is no response, is he being rude?

No. Many Yolngu people are extremely diplomatic to respectful Balanda and often go out of their way to wave or smile or say 'Hullo', but such greetings and other 'small talk' are not part of Yolngu culture. A normal pattern when Yolngu pass each other on the road is to ignore each other, and if an avoidance relationship is involved, normally one or both of the people will seek a wider detour. Though not as diplomatic as older people, most younger people will return a greeting , but they also will appear inconsistent because, for example, someone who greeted you the first three or four times, may ignore you on the fifth. What most Balanda feel in such a situation is some unexplained animosity from the Yolngu towards them personally, but really what is probably happening greetings being something the Yolngu have adopted from Balanda ways, when they are upset and tense such behaviours become very low priority and thus cease to function. (One of the aspects of Yolngu culture that many Balanda do not understand is the amount of tensions and stress Yolngu have to live with. This ignorance about Yolngu tensions is partly because Yolngu and Balanda see very little of each other outside working hours. Also the continuance of false stereotypes that Balanda have about how 'Aborigines' are 'peace-loving', 'co-operative', 'happy-go-lucky', 'generous', and how their 'kinship system works like clock-work', etc. merely furthers ignorance of Yolngu tensions. There are also causes of tension that Balanda often fail to sympathize with, such as social change, and pressure from white society to conform to white cultural values. And there are tensions brought by alcohol and by living in a large community with other Yolngu groups who are perhaps traditional enemies. One young Yolngu man at Milingimbi, who has a very responsible Balanda job that he performs efficiently, just does not greet Balanda, thus making it awkward for some to feel friendly towards him. A Balanda lady who knows him well explained that he has simply drawn the line at what he can and cannot handle emotionally in this modern contact situation. One of the Balanda requirements that is too hard for him is the responsibility of always being alert to give greetings.

Conclusion

Many of the rules of verbal behaviour discussed above might seem to the reader to be operating outside the school context, and therefore not to be important to the teacher in the Aboriginal school. But there are two main reasons why an understanding of sociolinguistic rules in Yolngu speech and behaviour will help the Balanda classroom teacher. First, a Yolngu child's assessment of him in the classroom will be more based upon what he sees as a person than what he does as a teacher. Yolngu base judgements purely upon the former. And the Balanda teacher's reputation as a person will be as much established by his behaviour outside the school as in it. It is also important to realise that what Yolngu adults think of him as a person will in the long run influence his effectiveness as a classroom teacher. Secondly, a new Balanda teacher's feelings (as well as Yolngu feelings) can be deeply hurt by misunderstandings, and misunderstanding can easily turn into contempt. If a Balanda teacher has 'written off the Yolngu', the feeling cannot be hidden from students, and again the teacher's effectiveness is lessened. To be forewarned is to be less hurt and to hurt others less. It is hoped that a better understanding of some rules of Aboriginal interpersonal communication might enable more tolerance and joy in living and teaching in an Aboriginal community.

Pre-Reading for Session 5

Boomer G. 1986, 'From catechism to communication: language, learning and mathematics', *Australian Mathematics Teacher*, 42, pp. 2–7. Reprinted by permission.

FROM CATECHISM TO COMMUNICATION: LANGUAGE, LEARNING AND MATHEMATICS

INTRODUCTION

"Catechism: Instruction by question and answer"
Concise Oxford Dictionary

I am at once pleased and daunted by the challenge of addressing my first national mathematics conference. As past president of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English and as a long time English teacher, I feel strong bonds with your association and its purposes, I know the importance of national associations as a means of binding together teachers across this huge continent, I know also the excitement of being part of a national network devoted to finding new territories, new ways and better solutions in education. It therefore pleases me to be part of your endeavours.

This address has been incubating for forty years, I realise. Since I entered grade 1 at Littlehampton Primary School in 1946, mathematics has fascinated me, frustrated me, humbled me, and taunted me. To me, mathematics is a vast land that has never quite yielded it secrets. Inured by the ineffable 1/0, I have, over four decades, dwelt largely on the edges of this domain, secretly envious of the very few people, as I see it, who are truly mathematicians, initiates to an arcane world of number and space, the numerate and numinous. I am daunted to know that some of you have achieved such divinity.

As a teacher of mathematics for several years, having beforehand been a quite successful student of mathematics at school and University, I passed on catechistically some of what I had learnt, supported by the mathematical equivalent of a prayer book, the book of "kinds and exercises", from which errant students might receive dispensations to improve their mathematical souls.

I enjoyed teaching mathematics as I enjoyed teaching Latin. It was cut and dried. Both had been fixed with cryogen. Both were cryptic[1] in nature; Both were linguistically cryptogrammatic; written in cipher. Both, at least in my classroom, were abstracted from life, "Fossa valloque" meant "with a ditch and a rampart". It was not required, however, to know the nature and significance of ditches and ramparts in Roman civilisation. You did not even have to imagine what a ditch and a rampart looked like. To this day, I pathetically admit, I have no clear conception of ditches and ramparts. Pythagoras's theorem fell out beautifully, rule governed like a stanza of Ovid but somehow neither evoked the provocative "So what?" They were both unquestionably, classically, given; frozen like the figures on a Grecian urn.

While even my early teaching of English literature tended towards exercises in decoding, there was always in English teaching, by contrast, a propensity to find oneself in a *"mess"*. Students brought with them the contamination of their everyday language and often persisted in making connections with their daily lives. Under the bombardment of the students' various minds, the classic words refused to mean the same thing to all of us. English teaching was harder. Students often wondered and wandered. Lessons tended not to go as planned. Occasionally, as a teacher of mathematics I felt little electric shocks of recognition as, in the midst of demonstrating a particular process, I glimpsed hitherto hidden patterns and reasons. These were enough to give me intimations of what I might understand, if only I could take the time to wander from the straights and narrows and muck around with mathematics. I realised that I taught more as a programmed tourist guide pointing out landmarks, than as one who had explored the territory and knew it from the inside. I had my intricate but precarious hold on what I professed. At my best, I passed on and reproduced what I knew. My training had left me with mathematical imprints and emblems, some passwords, some formulae and a battery of ploys and stratagems. It had not given me the confidence to survive off the beaten track.

As a parent, I have watched a daughter and son follow largely similar mathematical footprints in the 70's and 80's to those I had followed in the 40's and 50's. Arithmetically they coped very well. At year 8, algebra threw them for a little while, but they coped. I wonder, however, what it was about year 11 mathematics (quadratic equations and calculus and all that stuff) that seemed to stun their minds. Is there an Australia-wide purging of mathematics students at this stage, whereafter only the truly devoted remain? Comparing notes with other parents, suggests that year 11 has certain fortresslike qualities, *"fossa valloque"*!

My incubation for this address also relates to my many years as a curriculum developer. Mathematics, during this time, has bestridden the secondary curriculum like a colossus (Maths I on one side, Maths II on the other). While Latin now hangs on the margins like some quaint vestigial tail, mathematics is the inner citadel of academe, the most valued and most feared of all subjects. Mathematics has to this time stood largely untransformed while the rest of the curriculum changes or tries to change around it, discounting one less than fortunate mathematical flirtation with newness. Whether in pedagogy or content or structures, mathematics in schools tends to resist and persist.

In a study of classroom activities at the lower secondary level in 1981 Glen Evans produced quite unequivocal findings which placed mathematics teachers at the catechistic, conservative end of the spectrum[2]. Clarke (1984) reinforces the findings of Evans[3]. Mathematics teachers scored strongly on:

- limited student choice of content
- assessment by marks
- competition
- punishment and reprimands
- routine application

as opposed to

- small groups
- novelty and challenge
- relating to students interests
- student access to resources

"There is", reports Evans, "similar ordering of mean ratings for different subject areas, with mathematics at one end of the continuum and social sciences and art or music at the other" (Evans,p.160).

I cannot believe that mathematics teachers are unexceptionally conservative and therefore I speculate about why certain rituals seem to be so ingrained within the teaching of mathematics. What is it about the structuring, sequencing and content selection in mathematics which tends to fix and freeze? Is there something intrinsic to mathematics that requires a certain kind of teaching? My instinctive answer is "no", bolstered by my knowledge of outstanding mathematics teachers whom I know to have shattered the mould.

Lest you think that I am implying indirectly that English teaching, my speciality, is a hotbed of excited innovation, let my reassure you that Evan's results, *overall* present either a fairly dismal picture (if one looks for methods which encourage student thinking and exploration) or, conversely, a most comforting reassurance (if you had begun to believe some of the hysteria that schools are becoming undisciplined sites of laissez-faire).

Still, (and here I begin to take a risk), I am impressed by some of the feedback to the Schools Commission, following the establishment of the Basic Learning in Primary Schools program, that the teaching of mathematics may be a decade behind the teaching of "language arts".

You may dismiss the comments we are getting from program organisers as mere anecdotage, since they are not based on a systematic study, but there has been enough force to the comments to lead the Commission to establish a working group on mathematics and basic learning. Two related observations are emerging:

1. mathematics teaching in the primary field lacks a theory of how mathematics is learned.
2. teachers of primary mathematics are lacking in self-esteem and confidence in terms of their grasp of mathematics.

By contrast, it seems, there has been a dramatic growth of teacher exposure to theories of language learning and to a host of practices which accompany new theories.

Having now had access to information about the extended incubation which has gone into this address, you may be able to predict well what will be hatched. Some years ago I wrote about "the cosmic egg of English teaching", attempting to analyse all the forces which influence and constrain English teachers. Today I will not presume to be so cosmic about mathematics. Instead, I shall take one or two themes where advances in the understanding of language and learning may suggest ways of improving the teaching of mathematics.

A semiotician would probably have a field day analysing the metaphors of my introduction, but all the signs are that I am going to talk about the thawing of mathematics.

LEARNING THEORY

Catechism is the act of asking questions to which one already knows the answers and where the answers are unchanging, having been formally established as part of a ritual or tradition. While this mode of teaching is endemic to education generally, it is specially endemic to mathematics. I do not have to be apologetic, as an English teacher, in making such an assertion. The work of Evans and Clarke already cited, the now received wisdom of Cockcroft and a host of other instigations of mathematics teaching confirms the characterisation (eg Romberg[4] 1984, Skemp[5] 1976)

What Douglas Barnes[6], well known in English teaching circles, has called *school knowledge*, being academic and not related to life problems, Richard Skemp (1976), a mathematician, has termed *instrumental* understanding. Barnes's *action knowledge*, by contrast, is akin to Skemp's *relational* understanding, in which understood principles are applied to solve unforeseen problems. Mathematics teachers clearly face the challenge of changing a subject traditionally built on 'instrumental' understanding to one where students come to understand 'relationally'.

It seems to me fundamental, that Mathematics teachers will not meet this challenge until they have a "relational" learning theory as the generating plant for their practice.

Cathechistic teaching is based on behaviourist psychology, a psychology of imprint, practice and reinforcement where knowledge is conceived as being *transmittable* and as being constructed and framed outside the learner.

The preferred learning theory, which explicitly or implicitly underpins most of the new wave writings on mathematics teaching which I have read, sees knowledge as being *personally constructed* and *applied* according to principles internalised by the learner. One might call this a cognitive psychology which sees the human mind as an inducer or principle, actively and scientifically (in a rule-governed way) processing information and testing understandings through action. The "behaviourist" classroom and the "cognitive" classroom are chalk and cheese.

While teachers operate at an intuitive level as pragmatists, not articulating to themselves the present theory which drives their practice, they are effectively paralysed in terms of their capacity to change radically. The non-theorised practitioner is a kind of well-intentioned misguided or unguided missile in the classroom, likely to take up a new idea and add it to the repertoire but unable to generate infinite practice for new contexts. Commentators on both English and Mathematics teaching often bemoan the cosmetic change which follows some attempted curriculum reform. On examination, the individualised worksheets, for instance, are seen to be merely photocopied extracts from the old textbook.

In Australia, there has been mild revolution in English teaching, inspired by the work of people like James Britton and Donald Graves, but one does not have to look too deeply to find adopted fashion rather than deeply held conviction behind many alleged reforms. The phenomenon of "process writing", for instance, is sweeping Australian schools at the *surface level*. I suspect, however, that it is not well theorised in the minds of most who use it, or a version of it. In too many cases, a technique firmly based at its creation in cognitive psychology is being applied in damaging ways in schools by crypto-behaviourists.

Short-cut teacher development processes, designed to convert and change, will be ineffective. Teacher development, I suggest, must deal radically with the basics, and the most basic consideration is *learning theory*.

The *Language and Learning* movement in Australia has offered ways of assisting teachers to theorise their practice and to become reflective, self critical scientists in their own classrooms. The movement advocates action research methods, by which teachers develop themselves professionally through systematic, deliberate action and reflection on action. There is encouraging evidence in Australia that at both pre-service and in-service levels, the action research mode is gaining currency. The best of our English teaching reforms have grown out of this view of how teachers learn, I believe.

It is useful to revisit the learning theory behind the language and learning movement and to see what teaching principles it might generate for the mathematics classroom. Seminal to the movement has ben the work of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky[7], a brilliant Russian who died in 1930.

Vygotsky shows how from birth we are continually building "spontaneous concepts" of the way the world works. We learn by living in the world, observing and acting. The consequences of our actions lead us to new conceptions. Initially, primitive tribes without the benefit of formal teaching must have built a view of the world in this way. But once we have spontaneous concepts that work, we think of passing these on in a more efficient way to people who have not learnt them. And so, we attempt formal teaching.

Vygotsky examines how formal concepts are related to spontaneous concepts. That is, he goes to the heart of the schooling process. As teacher we may come to a class to teach the formal concept "photosynthesis". We might, instrumentally, simply require that the definition be learnt and ask for a recitation. In Vygotsky's terms this is most likely to lead to "empty verbalisation". We may receive a strip of impressive words but, when we tap them, we realise they are hollow.

If we are to avoid such empty verbalisation, Vygotsky says that ways must be found to activate related spontaneous concepts and to use these as a kind of digestive juice for the new ideas. If the gap between the formal concept and the spontaneous concept is too wide, if the language platform of the learner is not high enough for leaping and grasping, the learner will give up the quest to understand and so either withdraw or give the appearance of understanding through imitation.

The good teacher will put a good deal of energy and teaching strategy into closing the gap between the spontaneous and the formal. So, the learners may be encouraged to talk informally of what they already know about leaves and sunlight. The principle is that the more of their own language that children can weave around the new idea, and the more variously they can represent the new to their own experience (through talk, writing, drawing, modelling, etc) then the more likely it will be that they will come to understand.

If this view of learning is accepted then there are profound, if commonsensical, implications for the classroom. It makes a mockery, for instance, of the notion of clear, unambiguous exposition. The "Johnny-one-note" mathematics teacher will make it hard for children to find cognitive footholds. The Vygotskyian teacher will devise various ways of coming at a problem, searching for analogies, throwing out the equivalents of grappling hooks to catch the rising spontaneous concepts of the learners.

A teacher who has internalised and personalised such a concept of learning may then develop a few principles which will generate appropriate practice for any new context or learning challenge.

SOME PRINCIPLES

1. Transformation

Whenever you transform what you know from one medium to another you get to know more about that which you have transformed. In mathematics, for instance, transforming a quadratic equation into a graph (or vice versa) will intensify understanding. Further transformation through small group discussion or through preparing a slide presentation on the topic will further consolidate learning.

2. Translation

In order to translate something from an abstract and formal code to everyday language you have to understand the abstract in the first place. The translation exercise will generally involve asking many questions of the expert (teacher) and selecting from one's everyday language to find suitable equivalents.

Being required to translate is, in Vygotsky's terms, being required to reach a satisfactory armistice between formal and spontaneous concepts. It requires the negotiation of meaning, or the pumping of meaning into what may have been previously "empty verbalisation".

Susan Cosgrove, reporting on such work in her mathematics classroom, documents what happened when students re-wrote sections of their mathematics textbook.

They took definitions of a point and a line containing terms such as 'dimensions', 'space', 'denoted', 'infinite' and 'extends' and in a group argued their way to the following definitions:

"*A Dot* - A dot is not like a point. It is a mark on the page. If you want to show a point you do a dot, for a point is invisible. A dot is a model of a point." (Boomer, 1982, p.44)
"*A Line* - A line is not a line, it is an invisible thing between two places. It cannot be seen. If it is drawn, then it is a model of a line. A model of a line is visible. A line goes on forever." (Boomer, 1982, p.44)

Now, purists might carp at this as being mathematically suspect. On the other hand, what would it show if they could regurgitate the textbook definition? What we have above is a negotiation of meaning towards the abstract and formal which is an authentic representation of their present understanding.

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3. Guessing/Hypothesising

Given the conception of the brain as a pattern governed inducer of rules, it would be antipathetic to the instrument to treat it as a 'tabula rasa' on which a teacher's understanding can be imprinted.

Vygotsky characterises the brain as continually guessing and acting on the guess, after which follows re-construing and renewed, more subtle, guessing. Rigid requirements for correctness will, in this view of human learning, kill off brain cells and anaesthetise the essential predictive strategies of the brain.

The new literature and curricula on mathematics teaching tend to encourage estimation and imagining of possible solutions and yet the inertia of right/wrong distinctions in school mathematics tends to operate as an exorcist to such devilish boldness.

Guessing requires the activation and marshalling of the spontaneous in the direction of the unexplored.

Brilliant work has been done in the field of reading instruction by Ken and Yetta Goodman through what they have termed 'miscue' analysis. They work on the notion of 'virtuous error'. Through children's present best guesses they can analyse what present rules the child is operating on. There is always a good reason for the present guess and that reason is the proper base from which the teacher can move the child into new conceptions.

One of the richest diagnostic sources for the mathematics teacher is the guessing of the children and their thinking aloud about problems.

4. Withholding

Perhaps the greatest art of teaching is knowing when to tell and when not to tell. I suspect that many children suffer from instructional overkill, a kind of drug dependence on teacher telling them. Indeed many of our so-called remedial students in secondary school may not be the victims of too little teaching, but too much. Pedagogically, in mathematics teaching this might mean much more use of the stratagem of "get into groups and see if you can nut it out for yourselves" rather than the traditional diet of exposition, example, exercise and test. Even if in groups they cannot work it out, attention will have been generated such that the teacher's eventual exposition will receive critical attention.

5. Asking Questions

Throwing out a challenge and withholding explanation creates conditions for question asking from the children, so long as they really do intend to find a solution.

A regime where teachers ask questions to which they have answers is likely to become an opiate to thinking.

When children commission answers it is because they do not know and it is a sign that the brain is seeking equilibrium with respect to the problematic. Of course, a classroom where children ask most of the questions renders the teacher vulnerable. Such a classroom is no place for the teacher who maintains power by controlling the agenda and containing it within the bounds of the known.

6. Collaboration

Opponents of group work in mathematics have been known to refer to "the blind leading the blind" or the good students being held back by having to tutor the less able. Clearly group work needs to be seen in the context of other strategies (including teacher exposition) but, equally clearly, it provides a way of maximising brain power resources and of allowing spontaneous concepts to be brought forward without penalty.

In mathematics as in other subjects children can and do learn from each other. Indeed, I would hypothesise that the more one outlaws collaboration (or cheating) in the mathematics classroom, the more one will activate an out-of-school network. Witness the prevalence of student to student communication about mathematics homework.

If the teacher's explanation has not been understood, maybe an explanation from a competent peer will help, especially if you can ask questions without embarrassment.

7. Formulating in Talk and Writing - Communication

Through talking and writing and representing new ideas to ourselves in our own preferred way, we internalise new ideas and make them our own.

The silent classroom cuts learners off from the chance to speculate and think aloud with others and to hear others thinking aloud. This makes the learning grasp more precarious.

Mathematics classrooms, according to the research I have read, are not by and large sites for *mathematics communication*. They are not workshops for the *production* of mathematics and for *talking and writing mathematics*. Mathematics is largely taught as a dead language as if all that has been formerly meant in mathematics has been coded once and for all and as if there were not people in the world still actively using it and pushing out new horizons.

If mathematics were taught as a living language students themselves would begin to discover and speculate, maybe covering territory already covered by experts but nevertheless feeling as if they have come to discoveries for the first time. If English classes can have creative writing, why cannot or should not mathematics classes have creative/communicative mathematics, where students write challenges for each other, discuss solutions and formulate theories?

I suspect the answer would have something to do with *power*, control and time. To run a communicative classroom takes time away from the pseudo-efficient covering of "the course" and opens up access to the students to power which comes through *the productive mode*. Control of the medium comes through *making meaning* in that medium.

The traditional mathematics classroom tends to place both teacher and student in the receptive or functionary mode as dictated by a textbook and a syllabus. I suspect that very little mathematics is actually *made* and *applied* in schools.

Susan Cosgrove (cited above), a teacher who operates on language and learning principles, reports on a fascinating mathematics writing lesson in which the students explored a concept through group discussion and then formulated their understanding in writing.

Groups initially produced these definitions of a factor:
- "Factor is a number that will go into another number"
- "Factors are whole numbers that can divide equally into another number"
- "Factors are numbers that can be divided into a certain number, like 4"

"When the year 8 students saw what other groups had written, they began to discuss the adequacy of the various definitions. They continued this in group discussions with the aim of improving their definitions. During these discussions the teacher spent time going around asking sticky questions to encourage them to be more explicit. When the groups reported back, their definitions were more explicit and some of them were quite adequate: eg
- "The factors of a number are whole numbers which will go into this number equally"
- "Factors are a set of whole numbers that divide evenly into one whole number eg. 30: 1, 15, 2, 5, 6"

"At the end of this lesson, the students were feeling very pleased with themselves, because they had worked out for themselves what factors are, written some mathematics, talked a lot of mathematics and read a lot. Mathematics was making sense." (Boomer, ed., 1982, pp. 42, 43)

Graham Little[8], in work for the Curriculum Development Centre, has recently finished a study of mathematics textbooks in some Canberra secondary schools. He also looked at the patterns of language used in the mathematics classroom. He discovered what all of us probably know, that the language of mathematics textbooks is only readable if you know what it is about in the first place. The language and symbols are attenuated giving little opportunity for Vygotsky's cognitive footholds.

No one writes mathematics as a story which makes great efforts to reach out and touch the lives of the reader. A cold, non-human, non-emotional world of abstraction is presented.

Cockcroft has shown that few adults are *at home* with mathematics. No wonder, if it has been taught as an unspoken language, apart from the catechisms.

8. Other Principles

Allied to the principles already cited are others which relate directly to the basic learning theory. They include the deliberate reflection on consequences, the negotiation of curriculum/learning sequences, and the conscious demonstration of how to read mathematical texts and to attack various mathematical problems.

In summary, at this stage I realise that I have done no more than re-state some principles of good teaching that would have been old hat to Dewey and which certainly underpinned the teaching of a couple of my old mentors in mathematics. In many ways they are unremarkable principles and practice. This leads one into the politics of mathematics teaching, to ask why mathematics, perhaps more so than other subjects, suffers from inertia.

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CONTAINING STRUCTURES

I was taken by a particular passage in Seymour Papert's[9] *Mind Storms* which helps me to understand this phenomenon:

"The top row of alphabetic keys of the standard typewriter reads QWERTY. For me this symbolises the way in which technology can all too often serve not as a force of progress but for keeping things stuck. The QWERTY arrangement has no rational explanation, only a historical one. It was introduced in response to a problem in the early days of the typewriter. The keys used to jam. The idea was to minimise the collision problem by separating those keys that followed one another frequently. Just a few years later, general improvements in the technology removed the jamming problem but QWERTY stuck. Once adopted, it resulted in many millions of typewriters and a method (indeed a full blown curriculum) for learning typing. The social cost of change (for example putting the most used keys together on the keyboard) mounted with the vested interest created by the fact that so many fingers now knew how to follow the QWERTY keyboard. QWERTY has stayed on despite the existence of other more "rational" systems. On the other hand if you talk to people about the QWERTY arrangement, they will justify it by "objective" criteria. They will tell you that it "optimises this" or "minimises that". Although these justifications have no rational foundation, they illustrate a process, a social process, of myth construction that allows us to build a justification for primitivity into the system".

It seems to me that mathematics is beset by the QWERTY syndrome. A whole educational industry has grown up to support mathematics as it is. Textbooks worth millions have been written, University syllabuses have prerequisites, teachers have been trained to teach certain content in certain ways, parents expect it, employers require it and yet meanwhile in the real world mathematics grows as a language and as a way of processing "the world". Spontaneously in every household people apply mathematics, in industry new solutions are found, in sitting here writing this paper I can break to consider proportions and patterns and to contemplate the architecture of the building opposite.

Ludicrous as it is, we seem to have a stuck keyboard in mathematics and yet an array of forces collide and conspire to maintain what is, and this, in terms of life and work, is largely dysfunctional. Whether in everyday life and labour or at the thresholds of discovery, this country needs *applied* mathematicians and yet we persist with our abstractions and our catechisms. Huge numbers of adults are alienated from their own spontaneous mathematical nous.

Like some kind of rich sauce, mathematics has been reduced to the point where only a few can take it and appreciate it.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the present state of mathematics is a threat to democracy. Too many are denied full access to it, too many fail it and too many come to rely on those few who have been initiated. Human dignity is undermined by the submerged guilt about inadequacy that resides with so many of our citizens.

I hope that I have made it clear that mathematics teachers are not to blame for this; that the system is to blame, not just in education. A complex web of machinery and interests support the industry.

If this is so, how can the cycle be broken?

TOWARDS REFORMATION

My analysis suggests four areas for reformation and would argue that if the reformations are not effected *together*, then the efforts for reform may fail.

In the first place there seems from a lay perspective to be a need for a major overhaul of content. What is sacred about the present content and sequence? Have not calculators and computers rendered a good deal of it redundant? What kinds of mathematics are needed in the home, at work and in living? What are the real requirements of industry and research? Are university mathematics courses appropriate to the needs of the nation? Even if they are, why should they determine the senior secondary syllabuses? What might a rigorous *applied* mathematics curriculum look like? Where for instance is the solid geometry and the work on probability and statistics?

Secondly, if we are to valorise problem solving capacity, application, and *relational* as opposed to *instrumental* understanding, then we need to reform what is valued and how it is valued. Examinations and assignments need to reward intelligent process as much as correct answers; right/wrong distinctions need to be blurred, and new ways of testing capacity outside written exercises must be found. Where are the mathematical equivalents of

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"practicals" and "vivas"? Teachers rightly teach what is assessed. No lasting change will come without reforms in this area.

Thirdly, there need to be structural curriculum reforms in schools so that mathematics as a crucial way of viewing the world is made available and mandatory as a core study for all, even into the senior secondary school. Principles of access and success for all must be embodied in the curriculum offerings and the course requirements so that achievable, worthwhile goals are set with respect to worthwhile content. Rigid streaming practices and covert factors that mitigate against girls need to be scrutinised and eliminated if mathematics is to be democratically possessed.

Fourthly, we need a massive reform of mathematics text books so that they become readable, engaging and capable of being understood without constant teacher interpretation. Textbooks in mathematics are unutterably dreary creations, insulting to the intriguing subject they profess to serve.

You will notice that I have included reforms in my four main targets. In a sense, I think that teaching reform would follow the other reforms. Teachers, and pre-service teacher courses, will change with the other changing structures.

This said, there is no doubting the need for mathematics teachers to wrest back responsibility for what happens in their classrooms. Too much is dictated by textbook and outside requirements. It should also be said that, in concert with other reforms, the work of the CDC Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching Project, which expresses the kinds of principles outlined in this paper, will be inspirational and effective. The kinds of principles outlined above will begin to assert themselves when the containing structures are addressed.

Sadly, however, I fear that, without the structural changes, all mathematics in-service courses and national projects for teacher development will tend to be in vain. They will be at best a kind of education for disillusionment, raising the teacher's insights and guilts, while the cryogenic forces remain at work.

A NOTE OF OPTIMISM

Although this address has been critical of aspects of mathematics in education, I can conclude on a positive note. It is my feeling that a new spirit is abroad in mathematics, that in every State of Australia curriculum branches are planning the kinds of reforms to which I allude, that examining agencies are rethinking both content and processes and that mathematics teachers are beginning to reassess directions and emphases.

It is not impossible to contemplate a future where more mathematics teachers at primary and secondary level love what they teach and are confident to go wandering with their students without losing their way. Nor is it impossible to contemplate a society where the citizenry value their mathematics schooling as both satisfying and useful.

It will require, however, a new conception of mathematics as "ordinary", as something we can all talk about and use. It will require less catechism and more communication in Australia's classrooms.

[1] *Crypt: underground cell, vault esp. one beneath church, used as burial place" (Concise Oxford Dictionary)*

[2] **Evans, Glen** *et al. Classroom Activities at Lower Secondary Level: Ideals, Practices and Influences* Report of a project funded by The Educational Research and Development Committee, 1981.

[3] **Clarke, David**, Secondary Mathematics Teaching: Towards A Critical Appraisal of Current Practice, *Vinculum*, Vol. 21, No. 4, November 1984.

[4] **Romberg, Thomas A.** *Curriculum Development and Curriculum Research: The Difficulty of Curricula Reform in School Mathematics*, 1984 (Mimeograph).

[5] **Skemp, Richard R.** Relational Understanding and Instrumental Understanding *Mathematics Teaching*, No. 77, December 1977.

[6] See **Barnes, C.** (1976) *From Communication to Curriculum* (Penguin), London.

[7] **Vygotsky, L. S.** *Thought and Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1962.

[8] **Little, G.** 1985, unpublished mimeograph, CDC.

[9] **Papert, Seymour**, *Mind-Storms*, Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980.

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